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5 August 1985

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ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON DEFEAT OF RESOLUTION 192 IN CONGRESS

Montreal HORIZON in Armenian 24 Jun 85 p 1

[Editorial: "Just Who Is the Loser?"]

[Text] Was the vote in the U.S. House of Representatives on 4 June on whether to recognize 24 April as a "National Day of Remembrance for Man's Inhumanity to Man" a defeat or a victory for us?

The resolution which was put to the vote, designated HJR 192, reached the floor of the House after long months of tireless effort, received 233 votes for and 180 against. It is true that the matter in question was not the resolution proper but the possibility of declaring the resolution unanimous. Because passage required a two thirds majority vote of those present, the result was not satisfactory in this regard.

There was no doubt, however, that in spite of this temporary setback, the efforts of the Armenian Cause Committee, efforts which shall continue, have had an effect.

First of all, the vote outcome is in itself a victory, since the overwhelming majority of members of the House made it clear with their votes whom they are for and whom they are against.

Secondly, those 233 members of the U.S. House of Representatives openly refused to knuckle under to the entreaties of President Reagan, Secretary of State Schultz, and Secretary of Defense Weinberger to vote against the resolution.

And in particular, they withstood all the Turkish pressures and threats made by Turkey's prime minister, minister of defense, and ambassador to scuttle the resolution.

These sober-minded members of the House were able to vote for human dignity and justice. They did not fall victim to distortions of history, and they put the morality of man above all other considerations. The millions spent by the Turkish Government were unable to blind and deafen these Congressmen.

The mere fact that the U.S. House of Representatives devoted 45 minutes to debate on the proposed resolution, and by doing this readdressed the question of the Genocide against the Armenians and recognition of the fact of the Genocide, in itself was a magnificent victory on the road of pursuing the Armenian Cause.

Let there be no misunderstanding: with a majority vote on this resolution we did not take a step forward toward solving the Armenian Cause. Even if the resolution had been adopted, we would not have achieved this; it still would have to be ratified by the Senate and signed by the President to become effective. And even if it had, the Armenian Cause would still not have advanced, since it is not with such humanitarian resolutions that Armenia's lands will be freed....

What took place on 4 June, however, was a confrontation, where the rights of the Armenian people stood up with honor against the enormous military and economic force of the Turkish Government and, against the pressure and influence of that force, accomplished an almost two thirds majority vote of the most powerful government in the world.

Therefore, is there any need to ask who was the loser?

8817

CSO: 4605/185

5 August 1985

ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

TURKISH EFFORTS TO DISSUADE ARGENTINE LEGISLATORS REPORTED

Paris GAMK in Armenian & French 29 Jun 85 p 3

[Text] As we reported in our previous editions, the Argentine Senate has endorsed a resolution which calls upon the country's foreign ministry to support the recognition of the Armenian genocide through the Argentine delegation at the UN.

As we reported then, the Foreign Relations Committee of the Argentine Senate endorsed the pro-Armenian resolution sponsored by a group of senators and recommended that the full Senate approve it. On May 30, the Senate put the issue on its agenda for future consideration.

That is when the efforts of the Turkish embassy in Argentina began to pressure the senators to prevent the endorsement of the resolution. Recently, the Turkish embassy sent to the Senators a circular letter in which it declares, after presenting a distorted view of the "events of 1915", that the endorsement of such a resolution by the Argentine Senate may seriously harm the friendly ties and economic relations between Turkey and Argentina.

The letter, typed on official Turkish embassy stationery, is dated 11 June 1985 and is signed by Osman Ulukan, the embassy's trade attache. The letter says: "According to information obtained by our embassy, the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate is in the process of examining a draft resolution regarding Armenians and the events of 1915." Charging that it is impossible to pass judgement from a distance of thousands of miles on historical events that have taken place at the turn of this century and that Armenian propagandists have "tripled the number of Armenians who died during World War I," the letter goes further and denies even the existence of Armenia. The letter says: "References are also made to Armenian lands seized by Turkey, even though the Armenians were dispersed everywhere on Turkish soil and Armenia has ceased to be an independent state since the 11th century."

According to the letter, in 1915 3 million Turks were killed and only 200,000 to 300,000 Armenians died mostly as a result of diseases, famine and "military operations" conducted by foreign powers.

Based on these "historical facts," the letter concludes that any declaration made by the Argentine Senate with reference to the Armenian question would help international terrorism, from which, the letter states, "no country is spared."

In this connection, Armenian terrorists are also naturally mentioned. The letter says: "Any declaration by the Senate on Armenian issues will only invite extremists to continue killing innocent Turks and will harm the existing friendly ties between Turkey and Argentina, as evidenced by a similar declaration by the Argentine House of Representatives which had a very negative effect on public opinion in our country."

At the end of the letter, the Turkish trade attache enumerates the "advantages" offered by Turkey to Argentina's trade relations and transit routes in the Middle East. After a reference to a prospective Turkish-Argentine nuclear cooperation project (an exhaustive article on this subject appeared in the second issue of the CAUSA ARMENIA), Ulukan ends his letter of lies and treachery by expressing the hope that "the efforts of both countries' officials will focus on future economic and commercial cooperation."

The circular letter is accompanied by a booklet entitled "Armenian Terrorism: History as Poison and Counterpoison" apparently translated from the English original by Justin McCarthy.

This is not the first time that the Turkish embassy in Argentina has tried to counter Armenian propaganda and political efforts and to pressure legislative and executive authorities to prevent any pro-Armenian declarations or moves. Just before the Argentine House of Representatives voted on the said resolution on April 17, the Turkish embassy again tried, unsuccessfully, to prevent the passage of the resolution using letters, meetings and other means.

9588

CSO: 4605/190

ARMENIAN AFFAIRS

ARTICLE COMMENTS ON ARMENIAN SOLDIERS' FATE IN AFGHANISTAN

Paris GAMK in Armenian & French 29 Jun 85 p 5

[Excerpts] [Editor's note] Below we present to our readers an article by GAMK contributor Dr E. Hovhannesian in connection with a demonstration staged by Armenian parents in Yerevan protesting the war in Afghanistan. Of course, the ideas expressed in the article are those of the author alone, and they are open to debate. Nevertheless, we provide space to those ideas in our "Free Forum" column out of respect for freedom of speech and expression.

In case any of our readers have different thoughts they are welcome to put them in writing and to send them the paper's editors.

Between June 17 and 20 the international press carried reports of a demonstration in Soviet Armenia by parents of army conscripts protesting the dispatch of their sons to Afghanistan.

First, let us see how well-founded the Armenian parents' concerns are. Soviet forces--nearly 120,000 troops--have been trying to rout the Afghan resistance forces for the last 6 years, but far from being subdued the resistance has been growing.

It is evident that if there is any internal Soviet dissent against the war in Afghanistan nothing is said outside the Soviet Union about incidents where that dissent is expressed. The voice of that dissent was heard extensively for the first time from Armenia, and that is a tribute to the courage of Armenian parents. As LE MONDE's Moscow correspondent reported, the protest demonstration took place in Yerevan. Nearly 40 of the demonstrators were arrested. To what extent can this demonstration be justified and how well-founded was it? To answer these questions we must first know who the demonstrators are. They are the sons of the Armenian nation, a nation which was subjected to the genocide of 1915 and which commemorated the 70th anniversary of that genocide this year. The sons of that nation are today sent to burn villages and to kill innocent people. How can Armenian youths bear to be forced into such a hell with the purported goal of defending the motherland? How can Armenian parents not feel the tragedy of what is happening? But for a moment let us set aside the moral aspect of the issue. There is also a simple question of life and death. Among the 800 Soviet soldiers killed a few days ago there may have been Armenians who have no interest whatsoever in Afghanistan. Sacrificing one's life for one's country

is naturally a great honor. Conscious death is immortality, and the youths of our nation are conscious. In the course of their entire history Armenian youths have sacrificed their lives for their homeland, their nation and universal human values. But forcing them to die not for justice but for a most unjust cause is unacceptable. The fact that the war in Afghanistan is not only unjust but downright evil is evident from what has been said by international organizations and various governments.

The war in Afghanistan has been condemned by nearly all the governments and organizations of the world. This war is, by its nature, unjust and horrible. So is not the protest of the Armenian parents justified? But if we try to answer the second question, the one about what consequences that demonstration may have, we do not have to go too far. The Soviet authorities regard every form of protest as deviationism, and they have no other means except persecution against deviationists. It is not surprising that 40 of the demonstrators have already been arrested. The action that will be taken against them will probably be very harsh because this is the first time that people in the Soviet Union are protesting against the invasion of Afghanistan. Now that these protesters have been isolated and no one has followed their lead they will be subject to oppression. But the voice of justice can be subdued only temporarily; that voice will eventually rise even in the direst circumstances. The voices of Charentzes and Paguntzes has already emerged from their prison cells.

9588

CSO: 4605/189

EGYPT

NECESSITY OF ENACTING ISLAMIC LAW DISCUSSED

Cairo AL-NUR in Arabic 12 Jun 85 p 1

[Commentary by al-Hamzah Da'bas: "The March, Legitimacy and Communism"]

[Text] Mr Khalid Muhyi-al-Din, leader of the NPUG Party, was asked in a Ramadan TV program what position the government had adopted that deserved applause from the Group Party. His decisive answer was the government's recent position on the application of the Islamic Shari'ah. The program host asked him about the distinguishing feature that sets the NPUG Party apart from other political parties in Egypt. He said clearly that the NPUG party is the only party in Egypt calling for the citizens' right to demonstrate, which, in its opinion, is one of their basic rights. The host asked him whether they were communists and he replied with enviable wit: "Does a communist perform the pilgrimage?"

Mr Khalid Muhyi-ah-Din was true to communist principles, which he expounded with sincerity, although he expressed his displeasure with the fact that his party is characterized as communist. He explained, either intentionally or unintentionally, that it is communist thought that governs political action in Egypt, be it with regard to the government or the people. The government adopted a position on the Islamic Shari'ah worthy of communist applause. The advocates of the Islamic Shari'ah pursued the communist course in demanding it: demonstrations. There is no power and no strength save in God.

As for the government, God Almighty put it to a hard test in two successive positions toward the Islamic Shari'ah, and it failed miserably. The first position was during the debate in the People's Assembly on applying the Shari'ah, when the government disregarded this matter, procrastinated in looking into it and was quick to bury it alive. Meanwhile, it found itself face to face with the personal status law which was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Constitutional Court. Before the people could catch their breath after God removed this nightmare, the government, with amazing speed and urgent zeal, drew up a new personal statute bill published yesterday in detail on the front page of AL-AHRAM. It said that the grievance and suggestion committee in the People's Assembly had begun debate on the bill concerning some of the personal statute provisions under the chairmanship of Mr Sabri al-Qadi. AL-AHRAM added that it had been decided to refer the bill to the assembly's legislative and constitutional affairs committee to prepare a report on it.

Islamic laws are buried alive and a dead law is being resurrected. There is no power and no strength save in God. And suffice it to have God for our religion; suffice it to have God for our hereafter; and suffice it to have God for our concerns.

This strange position truly deserves the applause of the leftists, the admiration of the communists and the acclamation of the secularists. It is also well-deserving of the wrath of God and the fury of the devout. The world press noted with concern that it hears anger and sighs coming from the Muslim masses.

We have in fact begun to hear the voices of anger and the sighs becoming louder. They originated from al-Nur Mosque in al-'Abbasiyah and were manifested by the call of the fighter of the Israelis in Suez and the rock that broke the waves of the Israeli expansion in the 1973 war, Shaykh Hafiz Salamah--God grant him health and long life--who called for a Muslim march on one of the presidential palaces to ask the rulers to apply the Islamic Shari'ah.

Whereas this position is considered a reaction befitting the government's course concerning the Shari'ah issue, we believe, on the other hand, that it is a sign indicating that Muslim public opinion is convinced that most of the nation's ulemas have renounced their sacred duty of giving advice to the rulers, and religion is advice. "When it is said for whom, O Prophet of God? He said for God and His Prophet and the Muslim mams and all men." We have been calling upon them for 2 years to undertake this duty but to no avail, as though we are talking to the wall."

However, when the Muslims adopt a position, be it an action or a reaction, they cannot behave according to their whims or forget or pretend to forget the law of their Lord or to follow a course other than that of their predecessors. They always follow the law of their Lord and are inspired by the Sunna of their Prophet. They are, in any case, followers, not innovators, rightly guided mahdis, neither astray nor leading men astray. We hope that the march will not be a means for muscle flexing and for provoking a clash with the government. We cannot find a single piece of evidence in the Koran to support this march which Shaykh Hafiz Salamah plans to lead to one of the presidential palaces. We only find it in the Koran, a call for "the way of the Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching" and soft talk while threatening the ruler with a wretched life and punishment after death if he turns away from God and promising him rewards now and in the hereafter if he draws near to God, for God Almighty rewards in this world and the hereafter. We only find a call by a preacher raised to the ranks of the best jihad without clamor or hubbub: "The best jihad is a word of truth by a despotic ruler." If we were to look into the epic of our honorable ancestors, we would not find the same thing so that we can follow and render ourselves infallible. Suffice it to realize that it pleases the communists to know that this does not please God.

Before asking others to apply the law of our Lord, we ourselves must abide by it or we shall earn the disapproval of God Almighty, as did the children of Israel when they were asked disapprovingly: "Do ye enjoin the right conduct on the people and forget to practice it yourselves? And yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?" We must search in the Book of God, which

we recite in Ramadan, and in the Sunna of the Prophet before we take any step in our jihad. If we do not find in them any basis for such steps, they are the steps of Satan which God forbids us to follow. The Almighty said: "Ye who believe! Enter into Islam wholeheartedly and follow not the footsteps of the Evil One for he is to you an avowed enemy. If ye backslide after the clear signs have come to you, then know that God is exalted in power, and wise."

On the other hand, we must remember that no ruler will give in to the logic of visible force in front of the people, for if he did, he would not be able to run the affairs of the country because, by doing so, he would have turned the country's fate over to the demonstrators.

If the communists, for example, wanted to apply communism in Egypt, they would organize another demonstration to influence the ruler, for so long as we have granted ourselves this right, we cannot deprive others of it.

Some understood President Husni Mubarak's meetings with the ministers of defense and of the interior and the appearance of photos from this meeting in the daily press without any comment to be aimed at giving these two ministers a free hand in confronting the repercussions of this expected march. Both the government and the march must be warned against infiltrators or government elements provoking any clashes that might have grave consequences for the country. The Egyptian mufti has issued a warning, published in this edition, that the march must protect itself against any intervention by the communists or opportunists. The truth is that if the communists and opportunists do not take advantage of the opportunity, they are not worthy of being communists or opportunists. Moreover, why do we pave the way for communist action only to use "insecticides" to ward off communist and opportunist intervention?

As for those who claim that the visit of the Egyptian Copt and his father to Caliph 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab to complain about being slapped by the son of 'Amr Ibn al-'As and to demand punishment is considered a march, they take people for fools and attribute to religion things that do not exist. There is no relation between this situation and the march. Otherwise, the arrival of a man from a remote area in Upper Egypt to the Court of Cassation in Cairo to challenge a ruling against him can be considered a march. No one can accept this even if the subject were accompanied by a number of Upper Egyptians.

The road for applying the Shari'ah is clear in the Koran and we have no right to avoid or shun it. God Almighty said: "God has promised, to those among you who believe in and do righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land an inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them so that He will establish in authority their religion, the one which He was chosen for them and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they lived, to one of security and peace. They will worship Me (alone) and not associate but with Me. If any do reject faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked."

12502

CSO: 4504/396

EGYPT

WOMEN'S ISSUES DISCUSSED FOLLOWING PERSONAL STATUS LAW CHANGES

History of Legislation Reviewed

Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 15 May 85 p 10

[Article by Nasir 'Abd-al-Mun'im: "After the Abrogation of the Personal Status Law: We Are Now Telling Women to Make an About Face"]

[Text] The women of Egypt have decided to form a preparatory committee for the holding of a large-scale conference to discuss the situation and status of Egyptian women in light of the current crisis which is related to the effort to appeal the non-constitutionality of the Personal Status Law. They have also decided to form a women's delegation which will go to the National Assembly in order to present women's demands and ideas concerning the issuance of a new law. They have issued a statement clarifying their position with regard to this issue. This was done during the large-scale meeting which was held last Thursday on the occasion of the issuance by the Higher Constitutional Court of a ruling which abrogates the Personal Status Law, the basis for this action being the non-constitutionality of the Personal Status Law due to the procedures followed when it was issued. This statement was prepared by representatives from political bodies and parties--including the National Progressive Unionist Party and the Wafd Party--the Family of the Future Association in Cairo, the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, and the Women's Status Committee in the Arab Lawyers' Federation, in addition to a number of other women interested in issues relating to women and to the family.

The meeting, which was chaired by 'Azizah Husayn, head of the Family of the Future Association, began with a discussion of the articles of the Personal Status Law of 1929 which will be in effect after the abrogation of the latest Personal Status Law--in spite of the fact that the situation and circumstances have radically changed since then!

Dr Nawal al-Sa'dawi explained the initiative of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association and its role in calling for the formation of a committee to establish a new law regulating family affairs.

Then Fatimah Zaki (of the National Progressive Unionist Party) read a statement which was issued by her party in 1979 right after the latest

Personal Status Law was issued. In this statement, the prediction was made that it would be easy to attack this new law and to describe it as only partially and inadequately meeting the demands [of women] when compared with their aspirations. She emphasized that the women's movement in the National Progressive Unionist Party is based on the necessity of joint and organized action and that it is necessary not only to knock down the employment barrier for educated women, but also to undertake an initiative among the masses of women in order to organize them and create awareness among them.

Muna Dhu-al-Fiqar (a journalist) demanded that this meeting be the nucleus for a mass-based women's organization and that action be undertaken in order to generally support the rights of Egyptian women rather than merely protesting the action of the Constitutional Court. She added that the current phase is a critical one because it is a phase of transition in which personal status will become a more complicated matter.

Fathiyah al-'Assal (of the National Progressive Unionist Party) touched upon the role played by the masses of Egyptian women and said that they are the ones most affected by these laws. She demanded the formation of a preparatory committee for the holding of a large-scale conference for the women of Egypt.

Angi Aflatun proposed that action be undertaken in order to organize a 10-minute work stoppage which would be held to protest the status of Egyptian women.

Then Dr al-Sa'dawi read the statement issued by the Arab Women's Solidarity Association, the statement was then discussed, and then a committee was formed to write the communique to be issued concerning the meeting.

The Women's Declaration: An Urgent New Law Is Needed

A group of persons interested in issues relating to Egyptian women and the family met last Thursday evening (9 May 1985). This group included representatives from many women's associations and organizations from political parties and labor unions and it also included university professors and figures from public life. The occasion for the meeting was the issuance by the Higher Constitutional Court of the ruling which abrogated Decree Law Number 44 of 1979 which constituted an amendment for the carrying out of the articles of the Personal Status Law. The decision of the Higher Constitutional Court was based on the non-constitutionality of the procedures used in issuing this amendment. This is something which we support on the basis of our profound belief in the principles of constitutional legitimacy, the sovereignty of law, and democracy.

We hope that this will be done in connection with other laws which were issued in the same manner.

Those present at the meeting were of the opinion that Decree Law Number 44 of 1979, although it did not sufficiently take into account the interests of

Egyptian society, stability of the family, or the aspirations of Egyptian women, nevertheless should be kept because abrogating it at the present time, without providing a comprehensive alternative solution, is something which will prove to be harmful because it will destroy the Egyptian family unit and will hurt the stability of relations between the members of Egyptian families.

They felt that it is not possible to go back to putting into effect the personal status laws issued in 1920 and 1929--laws which have been in effect for half a century--because these laws were issued at a time when social, political, and economic circumstances were radically different from those which exist today as far as the Egyptian family, Egyptian women, and Egyptian society are concerned.

Thus those present at the meeting felt that the time has come to revise the Personal Status Law in order that it be in step with the requirements of modern times and the development of modern society, and they felt that it should be modified in a way which would not conflict with Islamic law.

Those at the meeting were of the opinion that the principles of democracy require that any laws concerning the welfare of a nation's people should express the opinion of all of the members of such a nation--both men and women--and that the Egyptian masses of people should participate in debating and discussing such laws.

Therefore we call upon the citizens of Egypt to participate by giving their support to the demand to quickly issue a new Personal Status Law which would provide for the stability of the Egyptian family and would be in conformity with the principles of legality and justice.

Conservative Attack Criticized

Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 15 May 85 p 1

[Editorial: "The Attack Against Women"]

[Text] Some circles in Egypt have exploited the ruling that the Personal Status Law issued in 1979 is unconstitutional in order to launch a large-scale attack against the limited legitimate and human rights which Egyptian women have acquired as a result of a long struggle which began at the beginning of this century. They have launched this attack in spite of the fact that the ruling did not at all concern the articles of the law, but rather concerned only the manner in which it was issued.

The attack being waged by these reactionary circles, in cooperation with some people who call themselves "clergymen"--even though Islam has no clergymen or priests--is being extended to include an attempt to prevent women from being active in the work force and to send them back to the "harem" or limit the types of jobs which they would have a right to work at and reduce their wages.

The curious thing is that some of these "clergymen" were among the ones who were the most enthusiastic about women's rights and amendments for the Personal Status Law of 1979. But they soon did an about face after circumstances changed and new rulers came upon the scene.

The reactionaries are concentrating their attack on women because they represent the weakest link in society. Most women are people whose rights have been denied them and who have been put in a position of helplessness within the framework of an unequal marriage relationship, both due to backward laws and the ever-increasing economic vulnerability of the overwhelming majority of women who are caught in the trap of illiteracy and unemployment.

This attack is part of a larger overall campaign being waged against Egyptian society as a whole, and it is linked to the so-called "open-door policy" and the (U.S.-Saudi) reactionary imperialist onslaught which is being waged against the Middle East, including Egypt, and which is imposing its rotten and backward values and concepts on Egyptian society in order to eliminate Egypt's resistance [to this policy] and keep it from marching toward independence and progress.

The basic value which predominates in Egyptian society today is that of money and quick profits. It is not regarded as being important to worry about where this money comes from, how it is acquired, and whether or not the acquisition of this money has benefitted society or has damaged it. Money in itself is considered to be all-important.

Values based on work, culture, and art are falling into the background, and whoever stands for these values has no status in society and has no real opportunity to earn a decent living or a decent minimum wage.

Everything is being turned into a commodity--even human beings (both men and women). The law of the jungle prevails in Egyptian society and the only principle understood today is that might makes right. Egyptian society is gradually losing its cohesiveness, it is turning away from its true and authentic values, and it is becoming a victim of both backwardness and foreign domination.

Unless we are aware of the relationship of all the issues and the problems to each other as well as the importance of defending women's rights since women represent the segment of Egyptian society most vulnerable to persecution, unless we begin organizing in order to confront this attack, and unless enlightened men give their support to women's causes, neither women nor men will win the battle to gain freedom, progress, stability, and democracy.

Islamic Law Supports Women

Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 22 May 85 p 10

[Article: "The Only Man at the Personal Status Meeting Said: 'The Qur'an Gave Women the Apartment'"]

[Text] A meeting was held by a group of women interested in women's issues, representatives of women's political parties, and prominent women in the Huda Sha'rawi Association. The most prominent speaker at the meeting was Prof 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-'Arusi of 'Ayn Shams University. He began his talk by assuring everyone that he was neither a clergyman nor a person who worked in the legal field. He said, however, that his long periods of residence in Europe and the fact that he had constantly seen the Islamic faith under attack in various clubs--particularly those which concerned themselves with women's issues--were factors which provided him with an opportunity to make a profound and realistic study of these issues. As a result of this, he arrived at certain conclusions and opinions, the source of which is the Qur'an and Islamic law.

He said that, as far as the apartment issue is concerned, the Qur'an says, concerning women: "And fear God your Lord: And turn them not out of their houses." This means that the house of matrimony is the woman's house. This is only logical since she is the one who takes care of the affairs of the house. If we add to this the fact that there are children, then we realize that it is not reasonable to throw the lady of the house and her children out into the street.

As far as polygamy is concerned, he felt that this is a right which is not absolute, but rather is subject to conditions such as exemplified by the Qur'anic verse containing the words: "But if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), [then only one]."

He went on to say that marriage to more than one wife is something which is subject to certain conditions in terms of property and health and that, since there is only a limited number of men [who can meet these conditions], this means that the door is not wide open for everyone to engage in polygamy.

Why Is a Man Willing to Live With a Woman Who Does Not Want Him?

'Adalat Kamal then spoke and said: "If the law were in conflict with Islamic law, why then was it approved by three learned clergymen--Shaykh Jadd-al-Haqq, Dr al-Namir, and Dr Bisar--as well as three imams after having been approved by the Islamic Research Council, the Fatwa Committee in al-Azhar, and the specialists in Islamic law?" She then mentioned an interesting interpretation of the word darra ["wife other than the first of a plural marriage"] as being derived from the word darar ["damage, harm"].

She concluded her remarks in a very perplexed manner when she asked why a man would be willing to live with a wife who does not want him.

A lady named Zakiya is a flagrant example of how a women can be insulted and humiliated. Her husband divorced her after they had been married for 22 years and he married another woman after he had been living with her illegimately for 3 years and after she had been arrested on a morals charge. She tearfully told how her husband made attempts to kill her in order to get the apartment. He did, in fact, get the apartment and now she is cast out into the street, with no shelter. One of the female lawyers present, a certain Mrs Fathiya Shalabi, volunteered to help her with her legal problems. This woman's problem was the occasion for a discussion concerning the need to form a committee to help victims of this law, and a committee was, in fact, then formed for this purpose.

The attorney Amirah Bahi-al-Din said: "It is not only a problem of the law. It is also a problem of how the Islamic law courts conduct their operation. They conduct their operation on a very low level and, every day, they trample on the rights of women. What we want is for women to be protected by the courts and for personal status cases to be quickly decided so that women do not have to undergo so much suffering. As for the matter of apartments, Islamic law obliges a husband to provide his wife, in case of a divorce, with money for her housing, bringing up the children, and a servant. As long as all of this has been decided by law, then this constitutes all the more reason for saying that the woman has the right to the couple's apartment."

Shahirah al-Baz then brought up an important point, which was: Why do the articles of Islamic legislation differ in the various Muslim countries even though there is only one Islamic faith? In her opinion, the reason for these differences is that different economic and social conditions predominate in each of these Islamic countries.

Salwa al-Rafi'i then proposed that a silent march be organized and that it march to the National Assembly, meet the president of the Assembly, and present him with a written memorandum containing the women's demands.

9468

CSO: 4504/367

EGYPT

MINISTER SAID TO CRITICIZE JOURNALISTS

Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 11 Jun 85 p 1

[Commentary by Hamid Zaydan: "Minister Reviles Reporters and 3 Weeks Later Refuses To Issue a Retraction. So What Is Their Position?"]

[Text] In Egypt "today" is a minister by the name of Tawfiq 'Abduh Isma'il. I do not recall meeting him before except that I saw him sitting in front of me at a meeting of the Cairo Rotary Club which I was asked to address. He sat in front of me for 3 hours with his hand on his cheek.

One week later, I heard that he was selected minister of tourism. Then I learned that he had been transferred to a newly created ministry in Egypt called the Ministry of the People's Assembly and Shura Council Affairs which used to be run by former ministers Hilmi 'Abd-al-Akhar, Mukhtar Hani and Muhammad Rashwan. "Praise be to him who is everlasting!"

I do not claim to have more prior information about his excellency, and I do not claim to have anything on him.

Two weeks ago, I received an invitation from Dr Subhi 'Abd-al-Hakim to break the fast. I understood, wrongly, that it was an invitation to the members of the Higher Press Council. I discovered it was an invitation to the Shura Council members and the editors-in-chief of newspapers.

There I met an old friend, unionist Mustafa Ibrahim, leader of the General Union of Hotel and Tourist Industry Employees and member of the General Federation of Labor Unions. He sat talking to me about our colleague Isma'il Yunis' article in AL-AKHBAR about his differences with his fellow unionist, Fathiyah al-Sayyid.

We were sometimes interrupted by well-wishing guests. The Minister of the People's Assembly and State Council, Tawfiq 'Abd Isma'il, came to greet the guests, so he shook hands with fellow reporter Sabri Abu al-Majd who was sitting to my left, then shook hands with me. Suddenly, he saw to my right Mustafa Ibrahim, so he told him, while we were still standing and his hand in my hand:

"I read what was published. Do not worry. Reporters are either corrupt or extortionists. Do not worry about it."

I was pained and insulted by such a generalization by a responsible minister. I wanted to give him a chance for a reiteration, so I said with a smile: "All of them!"

His excellency unequivocally said: "All of them, both government and party journalists. All of them are either corrupt or extortionists."

I told his excellency, the responsible minister, who said this for everyone to hear and his words were heard by the Shura Council members:

"I do not accept this kind of talk from you, and I do not allow you to say this in front of me."

The minister said: "Who are you?! I do not know you. I swear on my mother's grave that I do not know you and am not talking about you nor am I talking to you. Who are you? I do not know you! I am fasting!"

I told him: "Yes, you know me. I do not accept this and do not allow you to say it in front of me."

The people around us tried to assure me that he did not know me, he was not talking about me and he was not addressing me.

The fact is that the feeling of pain and affront was not only due to the possibility that he was talking about me, but was also due to the responsible minister's generalization in raising accusations against all journalists and his insistence on such a generalization! It is an affront directed by a responsible minister at all Egyptian journalists in front of a large number of Shura Council members. I felt that, as an Egyptian journalist, I could not accept such insults from any side, even if the person had a ministerial position.

All this notwithstanding, I did not want to create a crisis and told myself that it could have been a slip of the tongue, a mistake or an attempt to be friendly to Mustafa Ibrahim, even if it were at the expense of the people who were not there. But as fate would have it, a journalist was there to speak for them. I did not want to turn this into a crisis, as I have already said, so I decided not to write about it.

I subsequently traveled to Cyprus to represent the Egyptian Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. I returned 1 week later to find fellow journalist Isma'il Yunis writing about the incident in his weekly column, "Under the Dome," in AKHBAR AL-YAWM. I considered the subject closed, especially since I expected the responsible minister to reply to AKHBAR AL-YAWM giving the journalists back their dignity.

Last Saturday, I was surprised to see that the "responsible" minister published a reply in AKHBAR AL-YAWM which mentioned my name, as follows:

"The incident mentioned by brother Hamid Zaydan has other details that were not explained. I did not and will not retract what I said."

In the interest of honesty, and since he swore on his mother's grave that he did not know me and was not talking to or about me, I published this incident in detail exactly the way it happened. I bear the feelings of pain and sense of affront because the "brother" responsible minister waited 2 weeks to say he did not and will not retract what he said.

I leave this case, in its entirety, to the concerned journalists and their representatives in the journalists union, the General Union of Press and Mass Media Employees and the Higher Press Council to adopt a stand in their defense against this responsible minister!

May God be my witness!

12502

CSO: 4504/396

EGYPT

NEW MINISTER REVERSES CURRENCY REGULATIONS

Beirut AN-NAHAR ARAB REPORT & MEMO in English 15 Apr 85 p 12

[Text]

Egypt has effectively revoked the currency-control regulations it introduced on January 5th and has reverted to the "own foreign exchange" system to finance imports. Announcing the change, Mr Sultan Abu Ali, the new economy minister, said traders would be free to finance imports using foreign exchange from their own accounts. The free-market rate for the Egyptian pound rose against the dollar following the announcement.

Mr Abu Ali was appointed economy minister at the end of March following criticism of his predecessor, Dr Mustafa al-Said, for policies that reduced the flow of foreign exchange, and following his nephew's involvement in a trial of 19 bankers and money-changers charged with dealing on the black market.

On January 5th, Dr Said floated the Egyptian pound in the banks as a way of attracting foreign remittances from Egyptian workers abroad. At the same time, he obliged importers to raise letters of credit in Egyptian pounds, which were then converted into foreign exchange at prices ruling in the banks.

However, the floating rate, which was around E£1.27 to the dollar, was not enough to attract remittances into the new system; funds continued to enter Egypt's black market at a rate some 10 to 13 piastres to the dollar better than the bank price. At the same time, foreign banks — who are banned from handling Egyptian currency — were effectively excluded from the import-financing business. This led them to question the government's commitment to the infitah (open-door) policy and to threaten to withdraw from the country.

Mr Abu Ali has taken an early opportunity to reiterate the government's commitment to infitah. He has also announced the streamlining of procedures for issuing import licences. The number of items requiring licences was increased in January from 130 to 333.

The new minister has also cancelled another of the rules introduced in January, requiring banks to reserve 25 per cent of their foreign-exchange holdings for a central bank pool.

CSO: 4500/161

EGYPT

CAUSES OF SUMMER RURAL FIRES EXPLORED

Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 11 Jun 85 p 4

[Commentary by 'Abd-al-Hamid Ghazi: "The Village Voice: Opinion About the Spread of Rural Fires"]

[Text] With the beginning of summer every year, fires erupt in the rural areas to devour everything the villagers own, claiming a large number of victims, including men, women and children, who either lose their lives or sustain injuries. These fires drive thousands of citizens away from their homes and peaceful lives to camps and fields where they suffer high temperatures and wait for government aid or charitable contributions to allay their hunger and cover their bodies. They remain in this state of misery until the fire damage is repaired, but there is no hope that the peaceful existence they enjoyed before the fire will be restored. Nothing can better describe the fires and their devastating effects on the people than what happened this week in the village of Sarwah, Qalin District, Kafr al-Shaykh Governorate, where fires devoured more than 300 houses with their contents of grain, furniture, clothing and cattle, and claimed 15 victims. Over 2,000 citizens are now living in camps under extremely harsh conditions. Despite the appreciated efforts by the governor of Kafr al-Shaykh to alleviate their suffering, they still need more care and attention by the governor, especially during the month of Ramadan and the upcoming Ramadan Feast. Moreover, the agricultural cooperatives on the governorate level must donate money from their profits to help alleviate the sufferings of these people and to participate in replanning the village so that they can return to it as soon as possible. The role of local government agencies in the governorate must be limited [as given] to visiting the fire sites, giving licenses for spending urgent aid and forming fund-raising committees and undertaking other temporary measures to deal with the disaster until the next fire and new statements, without thinking of initiating studies and research into the causes of these fires in order to find better ways to avoid them and limit the damage they cause. Most of these fires are caused by a spark from an oven or a gas burner or a short circuit from exposed power lines in close contact with rice and corn straw stored on the roofs of houses. These lines have become the primary cause that prevents inhabitants from fighting these fires out of fear of the damage they can cause. Another reason that adds to the extent of the fire damage is the failure of the fire engines to reach the fire site in time, either due to distance, broken vehicles or the need to call fire engines from neighboring governorates which arrive too late. Furthermore, the absence of fire hydrants in

the village and the lack of wide streets that allow fire engines to reach the fire are other reasons that lead to heavy losses. Therefore, we call upon you, Prime Minister Kamal Hasan 'Ali and local government minister Hasan Abu Pasha, to include the matter of widespread rural fires in this painful way--in over 10 villages during the last month--as one of the important items on the agenda of the upcoming local government conference to be examined and studied in order to arrive at the best means that can put a stop to this rural phenomenon. Moreover, I bring to the attention of the officials some ideas which, I think, can eliminate the causes of these fires and limit their damage. They are summed up as follows:

- Agricultural cooperatives in the villages must purchase a press to compress the corn and rice straw before storing it on the roofs of houses. This will reduce the damage of fires that break out in the village. A law must be issued requiring farmers to comply and deterrent penalties must be instituted against violators.
- The subject of mandatory home insurance against fire must be studied so as to create a source of money for fire compensation.
- The Ministry of Electricity must replace the exposed power lines with ground cables, except in villages that do not have electric power.
- Each village council must be assigned a fire engine to get to the fire site in time, instead of storing them at the administrative district's headquarters.
- Local government agencies must pave the roads leading to the main approaches to permit the fire engines to get to the village without delay.
- Every village must have a number of main streets the fire engines can use to get to the fire site, even if some houses have to be removed to achieve this goal. These streets must have fire hydrants.

All this said, a popular awareness campaign must be undertaken to educate the village women about the devastating effects of the fires on the villages and the damage that can be avoided by eliminating the causes.

So, will we do anything about it?

12502

CSO: 4504/396

LIBYA

FINNS ACTIVE IN MAJOR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FOR LIBYA

Frankfurt/Main FRANKFURTER ZEITUNG/BLICK DURCH DIE WIRTSCHAFT in German
2 Apr 85 p 2

[Text] In recent days, Finnish enterprises managed to get a number of significant orders in Africa, especially in the north of the continent, which are connected with the delivery and installation of investment goods and equipment. Finnish engineering consulting firms and construction businesses also succeeded in being included in the execution of development projects. Finnish involvement is primarily in Libya and Egypt, but Finnish enterprises have also become active in Tunisia and Algeria as well as other African countries.

The most significant project in Libya presently executed by Finnish firms is the construction of a large educational center in Beni Walid. In the future, experts for industry and administration are to be trained there. The construction order for the educational center, valued at \$166 million, was awarded to the Finnish company, Perusyhtymä. In June 1985, the firm was also awarded maintenance and servicing of the first development stage of the educational center.

Recently, the firm of Vesi-Pekka Oy, Helsinki, received orders in Libya to build a tuna cannery in Zliten in the amount of 35 million markkas, and two water towers in Misurata (8 million markkas). In the past year, it also closed deals for port construction work in Zweitina (61 million markkas), dredging work in the port of Bengasi (12 million markkas), and repair work of installations of the mineral oil industry (4 million markkas).

The Puolimatka International company was awarded an order by Libya in the amount of 60 million markkas for construction of an office complex for a corporation of the mineral oil industry. Previously it had been charged with the construction of apartments in Tripoli (31 million markkas). The OMP-group took on construction of 15 water containers in the amount of 90 million markkas. In 1984, the firm of Yleinen Insinööritoimisto (YIT), Helsinki, concluded maintenance work at the Tripoli airport (4 million markkas). The Finnish firm Valio constructed in Al Beida a complete trunk dairy, the value of which came to \$20 million. It also took on the training of specialized personnel. The dairy produces fresh milk, long-lasting milk, yogurt and cheese.

Finnish engineering consulting firms also managed to get significant orders in Libya. Devecon, a joint enterprise of the four firms CJN, Ekono, Soil & Water, and Liikennetnikka, was awarded the planning and consulting work for the new town of Ras Lanuf, which is later to accommodate about 40,000 workers and their families of the industrial site. It also assumed preparation of a general traffic plan for Tripoli and consulting tasks for the major highway Sabrata-Ras Jedir.

The Kimmene-Stroemberg Oy company recently obtained in Egypt an order for delivery of large transformers in the amount of 30 million markkas. Funds from Finnish development aid and export credits are to be made available to finance the order. Delivery and installation of the transformers will be carried out in 1985-1986. The Nokia Engineering firm, Helsinki, was entrusted in Egypt with the supervision of a project connected with electrification of 350 villages. This will bring more than 500,000 people into the power supply network. The enterprise also built a testing station for desalinization of sea water in the Suez power plant and repaired and computerized the power supply grid in the west of Cairo. Egypt awarded to the Raumo-Repola company an order for rock-crushing installations and railroad cranes.

Finnish construction firms are also involved in Egypt. Hartela Contractors received orders in the amount of 129 million markkas for the construction of three vacation villages in Ismailia and in the area of Alexandria. Before that, they had built in Cairo the Marriott Omar Khayyam Hotel and the Sphinx Holiday Inn. The firm of Vesta Oy, Helsinki, took on construction of a sewage treatment plant at Kafr el Dawar in the Nile Delta. Plancenter and Finnplanco are among the Finnish engineering consulting firms working in Egypt. Plancenter was included in several small projects, among them the management of a hospital. Finnplanco prepared a study on the development of tourism in the region of El Fayum.

In Tunisia, the Finnish Tamro corporation, jointly with two Arab investment banks and Tunisian enterprises, is constructing in Grombalia, about 30 km from Tunis, a factory for the production of non-sterile, disposable products of fibrous web for use in hospitals. The investment cost for the factory, which is to start production at the turn of the year 1985/86, is listed as \$5 million. The Tamro corporation which is equipping the plant contributes one-third of the financing. In Algeria, Kemira Oy was included in the modernization of three chemical works in Annaba which produce sulfuric and phosphoric acid and various fertilizers.

In the West African region, Outokumpu Oy recently was awarded an order in Mauritania in the amount of roughly \$20 million for delivery of equipment and storage installations for the Samin copper mine in Akjoujt, located about 260 km northeast of the capital city Nouakchott. The order provides particularly for a crushing plant and a concentration plant.

In February 1985 the Lemminkainen Oy company, Helsinki, was awarded the construction of the first factory for hollow glassware in Liberia. The order is valued at 20 million markkas. The Finnish enterprise, together with a U.S.

firm, had previously carried out the expansion of the Robertsfield airport near Monrovia. It also repaired the Liberian iron ore mine and built a water treatment plant with a daily capacity of 40,000 cubic meters.

The French subsidiary of the engineering consulting firm Jaako Poyry International Oy, Helsinki, in the People's Republic of the Congo was included in the Ouessou wood processing project for which the World Bank granted a loan of \$12 million. This project of the Societe Congolaise des Bois de Ouessou (SCBO), Brazzaville, involves construction and operation of a saw mill and chip board factory which is to be completed in mid-1986. Jaako Poyry International Oy is also involved in a project of the wood processing industry in Tanzania. It concerns the repair and expansion of the wood complex of Tembo Chipboards Ltd at the foot of the Usambara mountains. The Finnish International Development Agency (Finnida) assumed financing for the planning and construction supervision as well as training measures. The FRG agreed to subsidize this project with DM 12 million.

In Ethiopia, Finnagro, a consortium of four Finnish firms including the aforementioned Valio enterprise, is reorganizing the milk collection and distribution system in the capital, Addis Ababa. The Finnish construction firm Naaraharju obtained an order valued at 22 million markkas to build a congress hall in Addis Ababa.

In Kenya, Lemminkainen Oy, already mentioned above, was entrusted with repairing a 137 km long section of a national highway. The Kenyan-Finnish joint enterprise, Kefinco, is active in Kenya in the field of water management. By building pump wells, it has contributed since 1981 to supplying water to the Kenyan population in rural areas. In Mozambique a team of Finnish experts received the order for reorganizing and improving the container traffic in the port of Nacala, the most important seaport for the inland country of Malawi. This project is being financed by the Finnish government.

Finland grants a significant amount of development aid which, in 1985, comes to 1.32 billion markkas or 0.4 percent of the gross domestic product. Of this amount, 537.7 million markkas constitute multilateral development assistance, and 786.3 million markkas are direct allocations. For 1986, a further increase of total development aid to about 1.6 billion markkas is planned. The most important recipient countries will be Egypt, Kenya, Zambia, Sri Lanka and Tanzania. In 1985, Tanzania holds first place with 115 million markkas of development aid. It was learned recently that Finland intends to join the aid fund for Africa sponsored by the World Bank and will make 78.3 million markkas available for this purpose.

9917

CSO: 4620/41

MOROCCO

HEAD OF PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES OPPOSITION, FOREIGN POLICY

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 18-24 May 85 pp 20,21

[Interview with Ahmed Osman, president of the Chamber of Representatives, by Aboubakr al-Sadiq al-Sharif: "We Are Proud That There Is an Opposition; Oujda Treaty Is Not Against Anyone"; Rabat, date not specified]

[Text] When Ahmed Osman, brother-in-law of the king of Morocco and head of the National Rally of Independents Party, was elected president of the Moroccan Chamber of Representatives, informed sources said that he was the only political party leader appointed to assume a highly responsible position and added that the other party leaders would not be given any functions.

When he became president of the Chamber of Representatives and formed a new government, the consequences, which the source of the Moroccan decision had in mind in connection with Osman's assignment to this function, became clear to observers. While the new government contained three "quasi-governmental" parties, and most of the parties remained "iron-clad" in the wing of the opposition, the structuring of the Chamber of Representatives invited a high proportion of young, educated generations who demanded, in accordance with the rules of the Moroccan democratic path, that the leadership have some degree of experience, sophistication and astuteness, as personal characteristics, in addition to academic qualifications and the confidence of the king.

Ahmed Osman, who has been prime minister for the past 8 years and has held numerous posts, is considered part of the Moroccan throne. Osman is one of the group who has accompanied the king of Morocco in school and in government ever since he was crown prince. Osman has avoided newspaper interviews for some time, but did not deny AL-TADAMUN this interview. He explained to us that he held AL-TADAMUN in special esteem when we asked for this interview.

[Question] Your assumption of the post of president of the Chamber of Representatives at this particular stage is thought to signal a movement to correct the democratic course. This is especially true in view of the fact that you were among those who laid the foundations of this course while you were prime minister. In addition, during the recent electoral campaign, your party

raised the slogan, "Correction To Let the Voice of the Masses Be Heard." On this basis, what is your view of the future of the democratic experiment? What obstacles have hindered its progress?

[Answer] In Morocco, our faith in democracy is what has made us adhere to the principles of law, the methods of political struggle and open, democratic debate. All these things are in the forefront of the programs which aim at achieving corrections and growth, preserving the gains of the nation and encouraging collective, volunteer and mobilized activity.

We in the National Rally of Independents still recall with great pride how the king praised our militants, at the time the government preceding this one was formed. He described them as being a group of sincere, devoted individuals and enabled them to assume the role of a group making positive criticism of the various flaws and shortcomings in government programs. This was by virtue of rotation and alteration in carrying out functions of state and opposition. All political parties and organizations are subject to these in the context of sound democracy.

Hence, I believe that any democratic course inevitably has obstacles blocking its path. We do not deny that our democratic path has certain breaches and gaps. We have observed this in the past. We are still observing some of this now. However, fairness and impartiality force us to recognize that the democratic path in our country, despite certain defects which have surrounded and continue to surround it, is still a model for other ruling regimes in the Third World.

[Question] The Chamber of Representatives has persistently made its presence felt in all regional, national and international problems in its capacity as a supporting pillar of Morocco's positions. In your capacity as president of the Chamber of Representatives, what do you think of the variables on the Arab scene, especially with regard to the Palestinian problem?

[Answer] Actually the Chamber of Representatives has consistently participated in important, historic moments and events, whether on the national, regional or international scene.

On the national scene, for example, the Chamber of Representatives witnessed a historic meeting on the foremost Moroccan problem, the Western Sahara, when the king gave a speech to the chamber. He recalled the efforts which our country had made, before the decision to withdraw from the Organization of African Unity (OAU). On the regional level the chamber was given the opportunity to participate in laying the foundation which moved the course of the African-Arab Union (the Oujda Treaty) from the realm of aspiration and hope to actual accomplishment and operation. On the national level, parliament participated in consecrating the "Day of the Land," a day of solidarity with the militant Palestinian people.

With regard to this latter event, parliament issued a statement calling for an international conference to be convened to solve the Middle East problem. All parties to the dispute would participate, although Morocco has not yet embraced this idea officially.

The most important thing which must be achieved in this domain is to guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people and to establish the Palestinian state, with agreement of the PLO.

Whether this goal is achieved through the peace plan decided upon at the 1982 Fes summit, or an international conference such as the one indicated in the statement of the chamber, or any other effort made by our brother Arabs (if they cease being carried away in a maze of conflicts and internecine fighting), the king, government and people of Morocco will continue to support the struggle of the militant Palestinian people until victory is achieved and the land returns to its legitimate owners.

[Question] As for the 1985 budget of Morocco, fierce debate broke out while it was being discussed in parliament. After it was approved, debate continued in the party press. The problem has to do with the controversy over certain production institutions moving from the public sector to the private sector.

We ask you, as leader of a majority party, are you for or against this transfer?

[Answer] The matter of certain institutions of the public sector transferring or not transferring to the private sector is not a national problem of major concern to public opinion.

Since economics is based on precise calculations, many nations besides Morocco have already critically examined the procedures they followed and have reviewed their economic sectors. Due to this, they have succeeded in defining their relations with utilities. They have ceded some to the private sector and consolidated others in the public sector domain, according to in-depth studies conducted in a flexible, rational manner.

The National Rally of Independents, in the context of its philosophy of society, does not feel that anything prevents the state from maintaining certain basic utilities. On the other hand, though, it encourages giving private initiatives a privileged position in certain other utilities. The party wants this privileged position, however, to be crystalized in cooperatives, cooperative corporations and associations so that it may have a collective character.

Our view with regard to this position is not limited to the economic domain alone, but goes beyond it to the local and regional scene, so that municipal and village councils and units can pursue and take over jurisdictions and responsibilities which cannot remain in the hands of the state alone.

I will once again repeat that the matter of transferring or not transferring is not urgent. What is pressing in my view is the reorganization of institutions which seem to be suffering greatly from problems and crises. It is important, too, to give special attention to the private sector which already exists. Many of its utilities are facing problems and difficulties which should not be underrated. The private sector should be taken in hand and encouraged to plunge into fields where admirable, tangible results can be achieved.

[Question] One feature of the new dynamism pursued by the Chamber of Representatives after you assumed the presidency is called here "supporting Moroccan diplomacy." We would like to learn from you what parliamentary activity has produced and how you assess the new role undertaken by the chamber?

[Answer] In fact, the period between sessions produced abundant activity. The chamber participated in three important parliamentary meetings. It organized a series of foreign contacts in the context of relations linking it with international bodies in friendly and brotherly countries. It received certain parliamentary delegations and made an effort to prepare for the current session and increase the efficiency of parliamentary activity during the period between sessions. It also conducted a constructive debate with the government apparatus in which it listened to certain proposals presented by ministers.

The chamber made an appeal to world conscience in connection with the United Nations call for a definitive solution to the fabricated dispute in our regained Sahara. This appeal was contained in the final communique of its meeting in al-Aaioun. In response to this appeal, several parliamentary and non-parliamentary delegations took off for certain brotherly and friendly countries to explain the dimensions of the situation in Northwest Africa and to confirm the international legitimacy which established Morocco's right to regain its Saharan regions.

[Question] The new Moroccan government which was installed weeks ago has provoked endless talk. Perhaps the most important point is that the parties joining the opposition appear to be a strong future shadow government, in view of their importance on the political scene. What is your opinion about the method used to form the new government?

[Answer] The National Rally of Independents has always and forever sought to adhere to its positions urging the need to make political parties a partner and give them the share they deserve in the organs and institutions of the state. It is these parties which involve citizens politically, economically and socially, raise their consciousness and maturity and uphold and safeguard elements provided for in the constitution.

I congratulated the new government at the opening meeting of the current parliamentary session and asked that there be greater opportunity to conduct continuous, constructive debate between the legislative and executive organs.

In my opening remarks I confirmed that we are proud of the opposition in our midst. In order to firmly implant the pillars of democratic life, the opinions and positions of this opposition must be taken into consideration. These positions and opinions often shed light on negative features which may be harmful. Providing constructive criticism and bringing up an appropriate alternative are benefits which assure that every move to solve our problems and difficulties must inevitably pass through a stage of national debate in which all vital forces in the country participate.

[Question] However, despite political rumors about the new government, I think you will agree with me that it represents only three parties. It is impossible for the chamber to arrive at a majority decision. This is what I meant by my question.

[Answer] When we demand that responsibility be given to political parties when governments are formed, it is to ensure that these governments are truly representative of all political segments and groups which are influential on the national scene.

This is what actually happened in 1977 when most government posts were based on political parties. They took full responsibility within the course pursued by the government at that time.

In this way interaction is facilitated in the Chamber of Representatives between the majority and minority. In this way alone can the state make one unified, strong program out of the various programs adopted by the parties, in order to confront circumstances which the country may face.

If we want government efforts to be effective, innovative and laudably productive, then they must at least be compatible and in harmony with both the members of the government and the parties of which it is composed.

[Question] There are certain questions which arise with urgency, whether at home or abroad. In their forefront is the current African-Arab Union between Morocco and Libya, by virtue of the Oujda Treaty.

This union has provoked sharp debate. In Morocco many people consider it to be the foundation of a regional union which fulfills the aspiration of uniting the countries of the Greater Maghreb. Foreign parties friendly to Morocco, such as America, for instance, regard it with great concern. In your view, what are the dimensions of this union, especially in view of the fact that your chamber played a fundamental role in achieving it?

[Answer] The African-Arab Union is a spontaneous response to the bond of religion, the kinship of language, the close relationship and the single fate which unite the Libyan Jamahiriya and Morocco.

In casting a quick glance at all Libyan and Moroccan movements throughout ancient and modern history and in studying the emotional and cultural evidence borne by these movements, one becomes convinced that Morocco and the Libyan Jamahiriya have constantly fought for the cohesion of desires of the countries of the Arab Maghreb and worked to consolidate and strengthen the bonds of this cohesion on the African, Islamic and Arab scene.

The treaty of union is not against anyone. Rather, it is open to all and aims at strengthening and reinforcing everything that tends to support the principles of good and giving in the sea of this world which surges with disputes, rancor and hatred.

With regard to certain positions which you pointed out in your question, it is worth mentioning that King Hassan II said at a recent press conference that he was satisfied with the manner in which the treaty was being applied and that our Libyan friends, from Col Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi to the most junior official, were performing their role as well as possible and with the greatest possible responsibility and sincerity.

[Question] Certain political circles have linked Britain's entry into a dialogue with Spain to end the occupation of Gibraltar with Spain's occupation of Ceuta, Melilla and the Ja'farine Islands, inasmuch as they are Moroccan territory occupied by Spain. However, Spanish authorities reject the principle of linkage between Gibraltar and occupied Moroccan territory. How do you judge this matter? What is Morocco's position on the subject?

[Answer] I beg to differ with you on the nature of the matter. I will answer your question with a question. Let us suppose that Britain decided to retain Gibraltar forever. Does that mean that this measure precludes our demanding the return of our lands occupied by Spain?

Therefore I find no reason to link the two cases. Our historic rights with respect to the two cities and the harbors wrested from us are proven rights, not subject to any strategic bargaining.

Even if the two cases are linked, because of geopolitical considerations, Morocco has the right to demand the return of its occupied territories.

No doubt you have noted the flexible manner in which Morocco is dealing with the problem of these two cities. It is another manifestation of the wisdom with which our country is treating such matters. Our country has adopted a philosophy for liberation based on regaining our right, through cooperation and the strengthening of good relations between us and our neighbors.

[Question] My final question has to do with Mauritania. How do you view the situation there?

[Answer] In the past we felt regret and sorrow, when we saw the former regime of our sister state Mauritania under foreign hegemony.

We were glad when the new regime came in. It returned to Mauritania its true sovereignty and restored to it its independent free will.

We also were happy with the restoration of diplomatic relations between our country and Mauritania.

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CSO: 4504/354

SUDAN

COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIAL 'IZZ-AL-DIN 'ALI 'AMIR INTERVIEWED

Paris AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI in Arabic May 85 pp 11-14

[Telephone interview with Dr 'Izz-al-Din 'Ali 'Amir, Communist Party Central Committee member: "Confrontation Between a People and a Despot" date not given; Paris AL-YASAR AL-'ARABI in Arabic; monthly organ of the Egyptian Communist Party]

[Text] [Question] Dr 'Izz-al-Din, greetings from the people of Egypt to the people of fraternal Sudan. Your victory is a victory for our people and all Arab peoples. The fall of Numayri is the fall of everything the lackey alliance represents. Our people follow the victories of your people moment by moment.

[Answer] The background leading to these events consisted primarily of course of the line of the the absolute dictator, who completely favored the policy of the West and the camp of Arab reactionary powers which allowed the Camp David accords and which have allowed Sudan to be turned into a farm for American military bases, of which there are now five, the latest of which is a naval base on the Red Sea to be used as alternate base for the one at Ra's Banas in Egypt. Following Numayri's agreement with Bush, Sudan has also been turned into a nuclear waste dump. This agreement was concluded a month or more ago and a specific area in the northwestern part of Sudan, near the border with Chad, has been earmarked. This plan of course goes way back; it had been proposed to al-Sadat in the past, but he backed off under pressure from the people and from public opinion. The plan was also proposed to the government of Australia not too long ago, for a billion dollars, but it refused. When it was proposed to Numayri, he agreed to it. Areas in which nuclear wastes would be buried were designated in Wadi Majur, Wadi Shadi, etc. This is an area through which nomadic herdsmen pass with their goats and camels. The important thing is that, under Numayri, Sudan represented a crossroads for American bases which start out, for instance, from the eastern flank of NATO in Turkey, where there are 44 military bases, pass through the bases in Israel, then through Egypt, where there are at least two military bases, one at Qina and one at Cairo West, as well as the third base at Ra's Banas. These connect up with the facilities provided by the Moroccan government to American forces. These bases in turn connect up with the military bases in Western Europe and in the rest of the NATO countries. That is just one aspect. Another aspect is the presence of four American military bases in Sudan: one is in the area adjacent to the Libyan and Ethiopian [as published] borders, another on the Red Sea,

another on the border with Chad, and a fourth in the west. These bases of course connect up with the base in Kenya and the base at Berbera in Somalia. These bases then connect up with the base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and with the well-known base in Oman. We gather from all this that Sudan has been turned into a meeting point for the American bases which have been planted in all parts of the world. All these bases are to be used in joint military operations and the new Central Command of NATO and its allies. Another purpose is to split Africa into two zones: a sub-Saharan zone and a North African zone. At the same time we cannot forget the link between America and Israel to confront the African and Arab peoples nor the support America and Israel are providing to the racist government of South Africa. This completes the encirclement of the area and its subjugation to the American plan. This is from the standpoint of Sudan's subordination to America and its being turned into an American colony.

[Question] And what about the integrated Egyptian-Sudanese alliance?

[Answer] The new and important matter for the Sudanese people was the 1977 joint defense treaty between al-Sadat and Numayri Article Four of which stipulated that Egyptian forces, whether by request or not, had the right to intervene to protect the Sudanese regime from any internal or external danger. Also, Egypt has forces in Sudan and has tried to use them against southern Sudan, but it appears that some fingers were burned and Egypt was not able to use its forces. These forces withdrew--or as Mubarak said, they were withdrawn--but the treaty is still in force.

The Alliance of Famine and Oppression

[Question] What did this lackey reactionary alliance mean for the people of Sudan?

[Answer] If we just take Sudan at the local level throughout the last 14 years, we find the following: The inflation rate has reached an astonishing level, known only to the economic experts, and the Sudanese pound, formerly worth more than \$2, was devalued 12 times until its official value fell to 80 cents. This has led to an imaginary rise in the prices of basic necessities for the people, and the citizen's standard of living has gone down. This has also impacted on Sudan's \$10 billion debts, which has brought the Numayri regime entirely under the World Bank. The latter has imposed austere measures on him, the most important of which was the raising of the support price of basic commodities such as bread and fuel, and so forth. The response by the people was violent in loud street demonstrations, and strikes by unions followed.

Financial investments during the past 10 years have aggravated the situation by concentrating on oil, while the Sudanese people were starving. The development projects were not well thought out; they came on the spur of the moment and huge sums were spent on them. Commercial activity was concentrated in the hands of the military economic establishment, which was made up primarily of army officers and which had responsibility for all exports and imports and obscured the role of the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. It created around it a parasite class and there gathered around Numayri a gang whose principal interest was simply making commissions. The class split

became vast: The worker received a salary of 20 Sudanese pounds while we find someone else giving a party because he was able to amass a third or fourth million. What made matters worse was the actions of the so-called Islamic banks and companies, which were Saudi, which came to invest and became the principal financier of the Muslim Brotherhood and created another wealthy class among them. In addition to this, Sudan was hit by a famine which swept all of Africa, and the regime did not do anything well thought-out to combat this famine. According to estimates, 1 million to 8 million people are dying in Sudan at the present time, in addition to the refugees from other countries. There was no attention to pastureland; millions of head of livestock and animal resources perished, and masses of peoples of the areas which were hit by drought marched towards Khartoum and towards the cities on the White Nile. In this disaster the class differences got worse and worse and most of the people do not have a day's meal while others have millions.

[Question] Numayri has become a lesson for the rule of despotism and tyranny. Could you tell us about some of the notorious things he did in this connection?

[Answer] It was total autocracy. The National Security Organization penetrated into every aspect of life and became the real force ruling Sudan. It has been established from documents which were seized recently, following the dissolution of the security organization, that there were an estimated 45,000 national security elements, 35,000 in Khartoum alone, who were highly trained in America and West Germany, to foil any attempt against the regime.

[Question] Organized security forces?

[Answer] Highly trained armed security forces.

[Question] You mean like the Central Security that we have?

[Answer] Yes. There was an agreement between Ja'far Numayri and America to train these forces, and starting in 1978 and 1979 contingents were sent to America. They were primarily taught street warfare, guerrilla warfare and the like, and the suppression of popular and military uprisings. This was in addition to the thousands of vile informants.

Inquisition Courts

[Question] Sudan has witnessed endless tragedies and instances of butchery following the establishment of the laws of divinely ordained punishments [hudud]. More than a hundred hands and feet were amputated under the guise of the "application of the Shari'ah" in just a short period of time. This is in addition to the creation or fabrication of charges, such as engaging in adultery, for example, and drinking wine, as well as the laws which were used as a tool of repression of the people through the [Muslim] Brotherhood. This led to increasing disaffection on the part of the people and the situation became unbearable. The people hated the authorities and Numayri issued a documentary statement called "Justice," which effectively abrogated the role of the courts. Inquisition courts sprung up, just as they did in the Middle Ages, sentencing people on charges of heresy and apostasy. The judiciary was

appointed by Ja'far Numayri instead of by the former judges agency, which was dissolved on various charges following their strike. There were no trials or defense. These were completely different types of courts. In the trial of martyr Muhammad Mahmud Taha, head of the Republican Brotherhood Party--and it does not matter that we had our differences with him--he said that the application of the Shari'ah in this form was barbaric and he demanded an end to this practice. In the quick trial which was held for him and four of his associates, he refused to speak before the court because it was not competent and he did not recognize it. The bill of charges was read without his having any defense and the judge then handed down a death penalty for the five of them. This sentence raised a wave of anger and condemnation in all parts of the world except Saudi Arabia. Then some opposition elements were brought before these courts and experts in the law or politicians were called upon to testify that the thinking of this party or that party was opposed to Islamic thinking. This was done to get rid of political opponents through these courts.

[Question] How was the security organization paralyzed during the popular uprising?

[Answer] At the beginning of the popular uprising when the people demonstrated against the increases and went out and were striking and burning, the security forces intervened and killed about eight martyrs. The police officers issued a statement expressing their unwillingness to hit starving people. The free officers also issued a warning not to attack the people except to protect public installations. This was one of the decisive factors in paralyzing the repressive organization and in continuing the popular uprisings to the point where there was a declaration of civil disorder. This was the decisive factor and it represented the power of the people.

The one responsible for national security, 'Umar al-Tayyib, said that this was chaos and called upon the people to come out in demonstrations to support the regime. Some members of the [Sudanese] Socialist Union did come out, but, as they stated themselves, there were no more than 3,000 of them, and they were proud of this number. The next day a demonstration of 30,000 people came out and fell into the hands of this man. The people filled the streets day and night. The popular movement of course supported the unions. Some of the officers saw that they had to go over to the people and they went to Lt Gen Siwar al-Dhahab in his capacity as commander-in-chief and minister of defense and called upon him to go over to the side of the people and they asked him to side with them, which he did. The first communique declared that the army would assume power, but it was not a military coup; rather, it was a siding with the people, and the previous regime was a corrupt regime.

The Revolution in the South

[Question] Is this perhaps the beginning of the end of the revolution in the south?

[Answer] The regime began to tread on the rights of ethnic groups. It is known that we have many ethnic groups and many religions, and we must respect this pluralism. We proposed self-rule for southern Sudan. Ja'far Numayri took this slogan, emptied it of any meaning, and an agreement was concluded with the leader of the rebels.

[Question] Will self-rule be achieved by the Addis Ababa agreement, which was not honored by Numayri?

[Answer] As far as we are concerned, the treaty failed to achieve this. There was no opportunity for any effective action or for union organizations or local parties nor was there any respect for or development of local cultures. In fact, all that was done in 1981 was that a governor was appointed for southern Sudan. No thought at all was given to development of the south and large numbers began to emigrate from the south. Ja'far Numayri reneged even on this defective treaty when the first signs of a democratic revival appeared: parties, unions and the like; and so he re-partitioned the south into three regions with the goal of fanning the fires of tribal and sectarian rivalries.

[Question] On what basis was the partition of the south carried out? Was it on a tribal basis?

[Answer] Yes, a division on a tribal basis, and on the basis of the partition by old colonialist powers. There are many tribes, such as the Dinka. This partition was reestablished. When oil was found in the south by foreign companies, the rebels responded with weapons. The revolution laid down specific goals, which were that Sudan was a unified country and the autocratic rule of Ja'far Numayri had to be brought down. Its main thrust was socialist progressive. Despite the short life of this movement--only 2 years--it has been able to occupy 80 percent of the territory of the south.

National Salvation Front...and Civil Disobedience

[Question] How willing is this front to cooperate with northerners?

[Answer] They are always willing to cooperate with various Sudanese opposition forces. This is contained in their manifesto and there has been coordination with them by us and with various opposition elements. We have had many meetings and seminars; there is a joint effort.

[Question] Does this mean that there is a nucleus of a front effort by the north and the south?

[Answer] Exactly. Our party proposed in 1978 a document entitled "Towards a Broad National Front for National Salvation" to establish a democratic system of government. This document proposed a minimum program for bringing together the opposition forces and the opposition parties responded with a dialogue. This was a joint minimum which could gather the people around it. We proposed a system of a general strike and civil disobedience.

[Question] Can you tell us about this experiment, the experiment of general strikes and civil disobedience, because it is important and its file has established its effectiveness? It is clear that it had a long history in Sudan.

[Answer] Actually the concept of the general political strike began in the days of the first military rule with the appearance of an opposition front at that time in 1961. In 1962 the Communist Party of Sudan under the leadership of comrade 'Abd-al-Khaliq Mahjub proposed the principle of the political strike

as the way to bring down the regime, which at that time was that of 'Abbud. The preparation continued for the political strike process to the point where it took place. The first martyr fell and this was followed by demonstrations and a general political strike for 10 days, after which 'Abbud was forced to hand over power to the civilians.

The Workers Movement

[Question] This takes us to another question. To what extent was Numayri able to hit the workers' movement itself, because it is clear that the trade unions were the ones which began the call for the strike and we have not heard about the role of the workers unions. Is there a blackout?

[Answer] In regard to the latest strike, the spark began primarily with the professional unions: the unions of doctors and lawyers, and it spread to the rest of the unions. Here we should remember the change which took place in the workers unions. Since 1971 it has been severely beset. After the death of comrade al-Shafi' following the 1971 incidents, the law of unions was rescinded and a new law was enacted on the basis of which general unions were organized. Instead of there being unions in the workplaces, there were specific unions across the country, for instance a general union of building workers, and so on, was formed. The right of the workers to participate in management was also revoked and the workers under this new system began to confront one general government organization which would hold sway over the labor movement and thus weaken the union bases in the workplace. There nevertheless appeared an entity under the name the Union Front, made up primarily of members of the Communist Party and elements of the Democratic Federation in the organizations themselves. They joined the leadership of the general political strike led by the railroad workers.

According to my information, 47 labor unions have joined the National Salvation Front and they are among the most important of its elements. This process has revived the labor base, and naturally the union base is old and firm and deep-rooted, despite terrorism.

[Question] What is happening in the area of agriculture and farmers? What about the farmers federation?

[Answer] Prior to 1969 there were union federations which arose from the nature of agricultural relations, and farmers actually participated with the government in a specific system. Differences, however, began to appear among the farmers. A class of senior farmers, i.e. rich ones, and a class of farmers who sold their labor began to appear. In the past there were no large landowners. The land was the property of the state and the state distributed it in small parcels.

Afterwards, an Egyptian investment company got into agriculture and the World Bank proposed the al-Jazirah project, one of the largest agricultural projects, for selling to the private sector in a public auction so that whoever could pay could purchase. A class of large landowners was thus created and the class struggle between the large farmers on the one hand and the small farmers

and the agricultural workers on the other began to intensify. But these last two were able to organize themselves into federations again and they sent their delegates to the National Salvation Front. The union movement is still strong and is able to confront the authorities.

Authority for Whom?

[Question] To what extent can you say that there is a change in the nature of authority? Or has the matter not been decided yet?

[Answer] The matter is still undecided. This applies to even the agreement which was reached. It is called the 13-point agreement, the goal of which is the re-democratization of the country. It was approved by the military and includes the following provisions:

- Dissolution of the former regime and its traces, bringing the corrupt to trial, and isolating them politically.
- A guarantee of the independence of the judiciary, the universities, the national media, the higher committee for elections, and the union movement.
- General freedoms: the right to express oneself, to form parties, unions, political entities.
- An attempt at economic reform.
- Sudan will pursue a policy of nonalignment and stay away from axes and will pursue a relationship of good neighborliness and a balance between its neighbors in the African and Arab arenas. It will seek to restore relations with the Soviet Union, Ethiopia and Libya.

The Chairman of the Transitional Military Council has already sent a letter to this effect to the Soviet Union and has received a response to it. He has also sent one to Ethiopia.

- Dealing with the problem of the south seriously on the basis of the demands of the southerners.

[Question] Has the military announced the continuation of the same austerity measures, the World Bank measures?

[Answer] This is true and it is necessary, but this may be only in the short run. To this day no one knows if Sudan has money or not, whether it has food-stuffs or not. The picture will become clearer through day-to-day effort. All we can do is remain firm and support the new democratic paths; these things are very, very limited.

There must be a study of the problem of production and the basis on which the national economy, the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie positions will be built in the next phase, which I believe will be the phase of national rule. In this phase all nationalists and democrats must stand shoulder to

shoulder because there are elements of old parties which do not believe in democracy. There are well-known people who have been demanding to be given authorization by the people for an indefinite period of time.

The Communist Party, however, has a clear position; we believe that in the next phase, in accordance with the document of 1977, there will be a great and important role for the national bourgeoisie to play in this phase of conversion because it itself has been harmed by the Numayri regime. The Sudanese bourgeoisie for example has gone into the street, and international adventurers, and foreign companies and 'Adnan Khashoggi for example have become the ones who determine the economy and its politics and the fate of the people. This is not the class of parasites which has gotten obscenely rich. The national bourgeoisie was also hit very hard in the Numayri's time; the general tendency now is to cooperate with them in this phase in order to rebuild the Sudanese economy, because there simply is no Sudanese economy.

For the past 2 years, joint meetings have been organized among various factions of the front: the Communist Party, the Ummah Party, the National Union [Party], southerners, and others in order to draw up an agreed-upon charter which will stipulate a multi-party system and the right of forces to express themselves.

There are demands adopted by all the forces:

- Ja'far Numayri must be tried for all his crimes.
- The state security law must be rescinded, and this is one of our basic demands.
- The provisions of the penal code must be rescinded.
- The law of judicial agencies must be rescinded.
- The "September laws" (the Islamic Shari'ah) must be rescinded.
- The law of security, which is like the Ethics Law in Egypt, must be rescinded.
- The law of political life, which imposes political isolation, must be rescinded.

[Question] What do you think are the chances of Egyptian-American intervention aimed at stopping developments if things proceed in the framework which you are hoping for?

[Answer] Very great. This is a big possibility. Our hope, however, is that the opposition forces and the Egyptian nationalist forces which have expressed themselves in a great display last week in Cairo with the Grouping Party, together with all the professional and labor unions and the like, will side with the Sudanese people.

A joint delegation made up of the Lawyers' Union and the Federation of Arab Lawyers went to Sudan. Faruq Abu 'Isa went. Ahmad al-Khawajah was supposed to go, and Sabri Mabdi went in his place.

AFGHANISTAN

CLASHES SAID INCREASING AMONG MUJAHIDIN

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 24 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] Kabul (BIA)--According to the reports reaching here, differences and armed clashes along the Afghan counter-revolutionary banks stationed in Pakistan, have assumed new and dangerous dimensions.

The severe clashes which took place between the Afghan fugitives and the residents of Hokari region, North-West of Pakistan, severely injured 3 fugitives and 2 residents.

Accordingly, the Pakistani police have surrounded the Bandi camp of the counter-revolutionaries in the North-West of Pakistan due to the inadmissible actions of its residents. The police, moreover, rounded up 60 leaders of the camp and clamped down restrictions on the movement of the residents of the camp.

According to other reports, a number of the members of Gulbuddin band carried out a night attack on Kamki camp of Sayaf band in Para Chenar Korma Agency in the same region. The attack ended to the serious injury of a member of the criminal Sayaf band.

A number of the Afghan compatriots living in Pakistan who were barred by the Pakistani militias and the counter-revolutionary banks from returning to Afghanistan attacked on the Shesho camp of the counter-revolutionary elements in Korma Agency. Five counter-revolutionaries lost their lives due to the attack.

CSO: 4600/533

AFGHANISTAN

CAMPAIGN AGAINST ILLITERACY EXPANDING THROUGHOUT COUNTRY

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 26 Jun 85 pp 1-2

[Text] In order to adopt necessary measures for accelerating the activities in the sphere of eradication of illiteracy and the consequent development of education in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the National Joint Commission for eradication of illiteracy held a session recently and discussed and evaluated the existing issues related to the universal campaign against illiteracy.

In present conditions, the spiritual development and ensuring of possibilities of cultural progress and rapid and purposeful enhancement of compulsory primary and general education are considered the most important tasks of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan.

At present stage of the country's revolutionary course, Decree No 28 of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA specified the direction towards the acceleration of the work for the eradication of illiteracy among the broad masses as guidelines for all party and state organs and committees.

Social organisations, committees and commissions for the eradication of illiteracy throughout the country have launched universal campaign for fulfilling this great mission, and have achieved here in the course of time since the victory of the April Revolution. The activities of the commissions for the eradication of illiteracy in 26 provinces in close cooperation with the concerned collectives and organs, resulted in the acquiring of literacy by 1,150,000 people.

Only last year about 150,000 people completed their education in literacy courses. This figure shows seven percent increase as compared to the number of graduates of the preceding year. And this year, as a result of extended publicity work around 400,000 illiterate people have been organised in the literacy courses.

Teaching materials and aid such as text-books, note-books, blackboards, etc are put at the disposal of the attendants as a result of the efforts of the Ministry of Education and the gratis aid of friendly countries. Around three million text-books have been printed so far.

In order to attract and mobilize the masses in the literacy movement, extensive publicity work is carried out by mass media (television, radio and other audio-visual means).

One of the effective methods is the illustrated TV teaching which is evaluated as a positive achievement in this regard. In order to ensure new qualitative growth of teaching, methodical seminars have been convened for the official and volunteer teachers. This method has enhanced the effectiveness of the work. The direct participation of residents, patriotic clergymen, heads of tribes through Jirgas (assemblies) and functions have qualitatively developed this process.

Decree No 26 of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA has also defined the work method in the sphere of the development of people's education. In this process, the universal education and making ready the young generation for the active, conscious and creative work whose aim is to develop the economy and culture and to raise the living standards of the people constitutes one of the basic objectives of our revolutionary party and state.

Under present circumstances when the defects of the education before the revolution on the one hand, and destruction and sabotage of the reaction and imperialism on the other, have created numerous problems. The cause of restructuring the new and progressive education demands the revolutionary action, initiative and creativity in work and joint action of all party and state organs and social organisations. During this time, the number of schools has reached to 1,086 and 18 schools have been newly built at the cost of 176 million Afghanis.

About 104 kindergartens are functioning in the country and around 646,000 teachers are teaching in the country's schools.

The Institute of Pedagogy has turned out and presented to the society as many as 2,866 teachers holding Master Degree. Around 19,000 teachers from the capital and provinces of the country have attended the methodological seminars of completing teachers specialization and received certificates.

However, concerned organs, social organisations, the Central Council of Trade Unions, provincial commissions for eradication of illiteracy have also had shortcomings and defects as regards the issues related to the organising and implementation of programmes of eradication of illiteracy in the country. The evaluation of the results of accomplishments in the sphere of consequent educational development and betterment of literacy affairs in the country aimed at adoption of urgent measures for accelerating the activities in eradication of illiteracy and full realisation of the resolutions of the PDPA CC and the Council of Ministers of the DRA, adopted in the extended session of the National Commission for the Eradication of Illiteracy on the afterward development of education and a series of other measures will culminate in the removal of shortcomings in the eradication of illiteracy. The concerned organs, while considering these as their serious revolutionary and social tasks, take decisive and firm steps in

materialising these directives aimed at the removal of existing defects. On the basis of the resolutions and decrees of the party and state on the acceleration of the process of eradication of illiteracy in the country, they do their best to change the literacy campaign into a universal movement and place before them concrete measures for implementing the assigned tasks as the order of the day.

Concerned organs have worked out concrete plans for the afterward development of education in the DRA and organised collective actions towards its materialisation.

Ministries of Education, Higher and Vocational Education, Commissions for the Eradication of Illiteracy, have accumulated best experience gained from the joint work in literacy movement with the all-sided cooperation of the provincial party committees, Democratic Youth Organisation of Afghanistan, National Fatherland Front and other social organisations. These Ministries have materialised this experience in remotest villages and towns of the country, and have been organising extended publicity, extension and training work in literacy courses for attracting broader masses to the literacy movement.

The Ministry of Defence and the Interior Ministry, by adopting practical measures, have accelerated the work on the eradication of illiteracy in the concerned regiments and units. Officers of the armed forces, particularly the political employees, have been and are being assigned to carry out literacy activities among the soldiers and to run literacy courses in localities and villages adjacent to the army regiments and units. In order to raise the effectiveness and quality of work in literacy movement in the country, the Ministry of Education has been assigning the best pupils of 10th-12th grades, students of the university and institutes, teachers of secondary schools and teachers' training institutes for running the literacy courses.

The material and spiritual appreciation of best teachers, cooperation of patriotic religious scholars and clergymen and others have yielded good results in the literacy movement.

Statistical survey of illiterate persons and their attraction to the literacy courses, preparation of plans and special literacy programmes for the tribesmen living in border areas are among the measures included in the plan of the Ministry of Education of the DRA.

CSO: 4600/526

YOUTH ORGANIZATION CONTINUES LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 17 Jun 85 p 2

[Text] A function to distribute medals to members of the literacy campaign of the Democratic Youth Organisations of Afghanistan was recently held in the house of Soviet Science and Culture in Kabul.

Several members of the literacy brigades, both boys and girls, who had received medals of "good teaching" of the DYOA CC congratulated each other.

This correspondent interviewed some of them who went to provinces and contributed to the great cause of literacy.

A young member of the literacy brigade, Hadia, a 12th grade student of Malalai Lycee said this about her activities:

"I always felt for my illiterate compatriots who were deprived of literacy by the unpopular policies of the past governments. Proper facilities have been provided for our countrymen only after the revolution.

"On the very moment of formation of literacy brigades, I and my other colleagues voluntarily joined them. Our group went to Balkh province and during its two month stay there organised 1100 illiterate people in literacy courses.

"I gained a lot of experience during the congress of this campaign. I have many unforgettable memories which I remember for long."

One of the other youths wanted to narrate his experience. His name is Rahim, a 12th grade student of Mahmoud Hotaki Lycee.

"I was also a member of literacy brigade assigned to Baghlan Province. We accomplished our assigned duty with a spirit of dedication. We were never exhausted. Our brigade organised during its two month stay there 850 illiterate people in literacy courses.

"The experience showed that more work is needed in the localities. More literacy brigades should be despatched to the provinces for this purpose. What is more important is that such brigades should also be formed in the provinces itself so that they can be in constant contact with the people.

"Now it is the duty of every patriotic youth to take part in the campaign against illiteracy."

CSO: 4600/526

5 August 1985

AFGHANISTAN

YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERACY CAMPAIGN REPORTED

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 13 Jun 85 pp 1-2

[Text] Kabul (BIA)--In the course of their three month campaign, the DYOA literacy brigades could survey eight cities, 19 districts and four sub-districts as a result of which they prepared 20 thousand illiterate people for joining literacy courses. This three months' experience manifested that our youth have made impressive achievements in solving the most vital problems of our revolution and society and eradication of illiteracy in our country.

A spokesman of the Central Committee of the DYOA reported that three months ago literacy brigades initiated by the DYOA CC were formed from among the youth of city and Kabul province. As many as 483 members of the organisation voluntarily registered their names for the brigades.

The members of the brigades followed a one week methodic seminar on literacy campaign held by the Literacy Campaign Department. After the conclusion of the seminar, they were divided into 35-member separate groups set off for Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Farah and Parwan provinces to help strengthen the movement for uprooting illiteracy.

The brigades launched extensive work for three months in the cities, districts and sub-districts of the said provinces aimed at opening literacy courses, organising illiterate people in the courses, helping literacy survey, teaching literacy courses, distribution of teaching materials to the courses, drawing volunteer teachers to the courses as well as holding seminars for the new teachers.

In addition to collective work, the members of the brigade could also individually perform prolific and constructive activities.

Najia, a member of the brigade in Balkh Province, for instance, could alone organise 229 illiterate people in new literacy courses.

Similarly, Hadia, a member of the same brigade totally organised 226 illiterates in new literacy courses.

Mohammad Sharif, who on his own initiative always volunteered to be sent to the remotest areas where no literacy course exist. Thus, he left at the head of a four-member group for Andarab district of Baghlan Province where according to him a few people knew how to read and write. They opened 13 literacy courses in the villages and surroundings of the district where 228 illiterates were enrolled.

Mohammad Rahim, another member of the literacy brigades in Pulikhumri district was not only engaged in literacy campaign in the daytime but he was also working during the night. He also formed a brigade from among the youth of the district for this purpose. He proved through his initiatives to his colleagues that our desire for eradication of illiteracy would be realised at a time when the youth launch vast campaign against illiteracy.

Abdul Wadoud, also showed a good merit in introducing literacy in Khulm district of Samangan Province and Dushi district, Baghlan province.

He could alone set up 24 literacy courses.

Nejat and Jawaaid, two other literacy campaigners went to Dawlat Abad village of Hazrate Sultan sub-district, Samangan Province and established literacy courses for the former counter-revolutionary groups now surrendered to the state.

Summarizing the fruitful work of the brigades, the spokesman said: "Every member of the literacy brigades was a best initiator and outstanding example of mass work in their concerned localities."

The spokesman appreciated the work of the literacy brigades in the districts of Kabul Province. He added that 70 volunteer youth have formed seven literacy brigades who conduct extensive campaign against illiteracy in Sorobi, Char Asiab, Deh Sabz, Bagrami, Mirbachakot, Qarabagh and Shakar Dara districts. They have set up 132 new literacy courses attended by 3,150 inhabitants of the said districts.

Likewise, 11 literacy brigades have been formed in 11 precincts of Kabul city. The brigades are formed of volunteer youth including boys and girls.

The brigades not only open literacy courses but help revival of the courses, conduct surveying work and undertake teaching literacy courses.

CSO: 4600/526

AFGHANISTAN

DWOA MOBILIZING HOUSEWIVES IN VARIOUS SPHERES

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 24 Jun 85 p 4

[Text] The establishment of women's clubs of the Women's Democratic Organisation of Afghanistan (WDOA) which is one of the significant gains of the evolutionary phase of the glorious April Revolution have mobilised a large number of housewives in various spheres of practical activities in their residential areas in the centre and provinces of the country.

Presently, 25 women's clubs are functioning in the provinces and 15 women's clubs in Kabul. It is considered to establish a number of women's clubs in Kabul as well as in a number of provinces in the near future on the eve of the 20th founding anniversary of the WDOA.

At present, more than 100 women are working in the sections of needlework-tailoring, beauty salon, knitting, music, English course, cutting cloth, English and Dari type-writing, housework, etc.

The main objective of the central women's club which has been set up on the basis of the resolutions of the nation-wide conference of the WDOA in November 1982, is to provide the opportunity for women in order to participate actively in the social, cultural and learning spheres of life.

Up till now, more than 40 women's clubs have been established for the mobilization of toiling women, their acquaintance with various forms of social activities, raising their professional knowledge, their active participation in production activities and generalization of literacy among women of our country. Likewise, in 15 women's clubs nearly 2,500 women have been organized in order to be acquainted with production, learning and mass works.

Cultural, political, mass learning, protection of mother and child as well as administrative and production works are the main activities of the Central Women's Club.

The political learning sections in the framework of women's clubs organise lectures, visits, interviews, and literacy courses. Presently, a number of literacy courses have been set up in the 11 precincts of Kabul city.

The production of handicrafts sections of women's clubs in the international exhibitions in Moscow, Paris, Bulgaria and Dushanbe (Tajik SSR) have attracted the attention of thousands of spectators.

Since the establishment of the Central Women's Club more than Afs 2.5 million have been obtained from selling the handicrafts of the club.

CSO: 4600/529

AFGHANISTAN

ENSURING OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN A REVOLUTION GOAL

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 16 Jun 85 p 2

[Text] Kabul (BIA)--The party and our revolutionary state following a progressive policy have put as priority tasks before them the ensuring of equal rights between men and women in all spheres of socio-economic, political and cultural life, taking care of mother and child, sound rearing of children, attention to the children and families of the martyrs of the Revolution, eradication of illiteracy, further drawing of women to production process and promotion of the women's role in socio-political life.

Tens of thousands of Afghan women are engaged in various spheres of economic and production activities. The number of women intellectuals in on the increase. Quite a lot of women occupy high party and state posts and are capably handling responsible tasks in party, state and social organisations.

The women of our country lead by the WDOA not only run socio-economic affairs instead of those fighting in the hot trenches against the enemy, but hundreds of women have taken up arms to defend the gains of the April Revolution. By joining the groups of the defence of the Revolution, militia and self-defence groups, they keep alive the traditions of their martyred mothers and add to the number of those heroic girls who have lost their endeared lives in face-to-face battle against the enemy.

The glittering memories of martyred girls such as Shamla, Fazela, Shafiqa, Jabar Khel, Gulalai, Noor Jahan, Latifa, Suraya, Afifa, Suhaila, Karima, Amria, Humaira, Zakia and tens of other unknown girls have been registered in the eternal records of the history.

The WDOA helps solving the family and legislative problems of women and provide them with necessary possibilities to make wider use of revolutionary legislation.

Illiteracy is one of the shameless legacies of the past tyrannical regimes for the Afghan women. With a view to take extensive part in all literacy movement, the activists and members of the WDOA voluntarily run hundreds of literacy courses.

In line with the spirit of the resolutions of the 9th plenum of the PDPA CC, that says that every literate should teach 3 to 5 illiterates how to read and write, the members of the WDOA play a noticeable role in generalising literacy among the women in localities.

The enrolment of over 27,000 women in 1,640 literacy courses is among the praiseworthy results of the activities of the WDOA who voluntarily run literacy courses.

The WDOA has 27 provincial, 21 city, 43 district and 35 ward councils. The establishment of the clubs as centres of social activities for women and drawing women to social life plays a good role in promoting their professional and general knowledge.

Right now, for instance, 45 clubs are functioning all over the country. As many as 55 chambers for exchanging experiences among women have been opened throughout the country.

The WDOA has established relations with 83 national, international and regional organisations and is an active member of the Women's International Democratic Federation.

CSO: 4600/529

AFGHANISTAN

COOPERATIVES IMPROVE PEOPLE'S LIVING CONDITIONS

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 17 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] The development of cooperative movement as regards the production and consumption is considered an important factor in improving the living conditions of the working people as well as one of the pillars of building a new society.

Consumer cooperatives and cooperative stores make up one of the links of the cooperative movement which is a new phenomenon in the life of our country brought about as a result of the April Revolution.

This movement persistently marches ahead despite all difficulties. The growth of this process in Balkh Province can be cited as a good example for our claim.

The Provincial Council of Peasants Cooperatives in Balkh opened last year four consumer cooperatives and eight stores in the city and suburbs of the province.

With a view to hail the 7th anniversary of the April Revolution, a mobile consumer store was set up where 51 items of essential goods are sold. It started functioning with an initial capital of Afs over 165,000.

Currently, 12 peasants' coops and 20 consumer stores holding a capital of Afs 8,000,000 are functioning within the framework of the said provincial council. They have a membership of 5,000 persons.

The cooperatives and the stores run by them have greatly contributed to meeting the needs of the local people for essential commodities. It has also helped stability of prices to a great extent. It is because of this that the cooperative movement enjoys ever increasing support of the people.

CSO: 4600/527

AFGHANISTAN

MEASURES ADOPTED TO IMPROVE PEASANTS' LIFE

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 26 Jun 85 p 2

[Text] After the April Revolution, the DRA has undertaken significant measures in the socio-economic life of our people. As an example, we can mention here Decree No 6 of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA as a result of which about 11 million peasants were exempted from paying interest to usurers. Decree No 8 of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA which abolished the ownership of big landlords on land and vised the permissible ceiling for land holders in view of the specific situation in the country. As a result of this decree, hundreds of thousands of landless peasants and petty land holders received land free of charge. The DRA state, besides distributing land to deserving peasants, also renders numerous agricultural assistance to peasants. The PDPA and the state of the DRA consider peasants as a most reliable pillar of the national democratic Revolution. After the new and evolutionary phase of the April Revolution, the peasants were exempted from paying the fines worth 722 million Afghanis on taxes for the years 1357-1359. The prices of chemical fertilizer and agricultural implements were reduced by 20 percent. And in order to help peasants the prices of cotton and sugar-beet were increased by 80 and 70 percent respectively.

Similarly, peasants buy agricultural seeds, pesticides and insecticides at reduced prices. During the post-revolutionary years, for the first time, agricultural mechanised stations were set up in the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reforms of the DRA which rents agricultural implements to peasants at cheap prices. Likewise, centres for assisting peasants were established in five main centers in the provinces of Balkh- Herat, Baghlan, Janzjan and Kabul in order to render more help to peasants. The sole objective of the DRA state in rendering such assistance to peasants is to free them completely from the clutches of feudals. Facts and figures reveal that agricultural output has considerably increased after the April Revolution as compared with the pre-revolutionary years. This demonstrates the support being extended by peasants to the DRA state and its agrarian policy. Currently, peasants are taking an active part not only in raising the level of agricultural output but also in the defence of the gains of the Revolution and ensuring peace and security in the country. Peasants are enrolling themselves in agricultural cooperatives and other social organisations.

Presently, tens of thousands of peasants who have received land as a result of the democratic land reforms are organised in agricultural cooperatives and union of peasants' cooperatives and cooperate in the process of the implementation of the land reforms and in solving disputes over water, etc.

In some villages peasants help each other and collectively take part both in sowing and ensuring peace in their areas. This, in itself, is a proof of credibility of the Revolution among masses.

CSO: 4600/531

AFGHANISTAN

NATIONAL BANK RENDERING VALUABLE SERVICES

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 23 Jun 85 p 2

[Text] After the new and evolutionary phase of the April Revolution, country's banking system was centralised which resulted in further growth and expansion of the productive and commercial units. This aim was achieved by means of granting appropriate loans to the said units by the concerned banks in order to facilitate speedier growth of the former which in itself benefits the national economy.

Banki Millie Afghan (the Afghan National Bank) by over half a century of working experience of valuable banking services, both inside and outside the country, has gained enormous prestige. The Bank was founded in the year 1923 with capital of 9.7 million Afs consisting by 72 percent of private and 28 percent of state shares.

Until the year 1953 when the project of the Central Bank was completed, the National Bank was performing the task of supporting the gold reserve (reservoir of the currency notes) and giving credits to the government institutes.

The Bank, by offering savings accounts, current accounts, letters of credit and having capable personnel and modern means, is always at the service of the customers. Moreover, the bank undertakes transfer of cash in the shortest possible time by means of telegramme, telex, and letters and by generalization of the check system facilitates the transfer of cash and credits.

The Banki Millie Afghan celebrated its 50th anniversary in the year 1362 HS (1983) and in the same year for its assistance to the Ministry of Education in rebuilding the schools and other educational institutions won the third position in school patronage and thus was granted the honorable banner. By providing letters of credit and various kinds of loans the Bank has played a valuable role in the development of the foreign trade.

Likewise the Bank through its branch in the city of Hamburg (W. Germany) provides comparatively cheap and suitable offers to the state institutes which in turn results in the saving of a large amount of foreign currency and the required goods reach them in time. Moreover, the Bank facilitates

the work of trading and forwarding of goods belonging to the state or private concerns, it is worth mentioning that this service is not included in the sphere of the duties of the bank.

The Bank through its nine provincial and other branches, including five city branches in the city of Kabul, and through its registered branches abroad, namely in New York, London, Hamburg, Karachi, Peshawar and Chaman, facilitates the transfer of the cash by its mutual accounts with other banks.

The data of the year 1363 HS the last Afghan year, ended on March 20, 1985 clearly shows 12 percent and 60 percent increments in the saving and current accounts respectively. Having in mind the unfavourable international conditions of trade and the domestic difficulties emanating from the consequences of the undeclared imperialist war, yet the distribution of the export loans shows an increment of 51.17 percent more than the planned target, the collection of the export loans shows an increment of 69 percent more than the plan and the bank has offered letters of credit worth of 27,6 million dollars during the said period.

The personnel and concerned authorities of the Banki Millie Afghan have pledged to render ever further services to the compatriots.

CSO: 4600/532

AFGHANISTAN

NATIONAL TRADERS EXPAND ACTIVITIES

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 25 Jun 85 pp 1-2

[Text] After the victory of the April Revolution, the patriotic national traders, by realising the importance of their trade, have actively taken part in expanding and developing the domestic and foreign trade in the interests of the broad masses. For instance, the increase of the number of registered pro-forma invoices is a glittering proof for this claim.

Our national traders import the commodities needed by our compatriots through 24 import unions of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries of the DRA. Before the Revolution, the traders of the country, by accepting the expenses for trips and tens of other problems, imported some goods with low quality at high costs. But now the national traders import at easy terms the commodities needed by the public through the filling of pro-forma invoices in the import unions.

Stating the above a spokesman of the General Department of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries, in an interview granted to our correspondent, added: "Import plan of this Department for the current Afghan year (began on March 21, 1985) envisages the import of commodities at the cost of 290 million dollars. And in the first three months of the year, pro forma invoices worth of 65 million were registered for different commodities."

The spokesman added: "Last year the General Department of Chamber of Commerce and Industries overfulfilled its set plan by eight percent. In other words, the department was to register pro forma invoices at the cost of 295.9 million dollars, but at the end of the year this figure constituted a sum of 317 million. This fact shows the active contribution of national traders to the expansion of economic affairs of the country.

"Similarly," the spokesman went on to say, "in order to welcome the 20th founding anniversary of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, joint corporations for importing textile fabrics, threads and synthetics, tea, vegetable oil and soap, lubricants, were established and commissioned in the country. The coming into being of these corporations have provided more facilities for the national traders in their import activities.

"Furthermore, in order to maintain and consolidate the trade relations of the country's merchants with foreign traders, the General Department of Chamber of Commerce and Industries have facilitated the business trips of national traders to different countries of the world.

"The Department with the cooperation of patriotic traders of the country does its best to import essential goods and prevent the import of luxurious items," the spokesman concluded.

CSO: 4600/530

AFGHANISTAN

FOREIGN TRADE EXPANDING

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 23 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] Kabul (BIA)--The Democratic Republic of Afghanistan has vast commercial links with a number of countries, including socialist, developing and capitalist countries. These relations are ever greater expanding.

Apart from the socialist countries, Japan, Hong Kong, France, the FRG and the USA are the main clients of the Afghan goods. The main exporting items to the said countries are fresh fruits, medicinal herbs, livestock products such as intestine, karakul pellets as well as rugs, carpets and handicraft products. The DRA, in return, receives machinery, tobacco products, lubricants, chemical goods, electronics, etc, from these countries.

At present, over 40 percent of circulation of trade of the DRA takes place with capitalist and developing countries.

Out of 1,403 million dollars of the total volume of Afghanistan's trade in 1361 (1982), 68.307 million dollars which constitute 43.36 percent of the trade of the country, is with the above-mentioned countries. The rest is with the socialist countries.

Similarly, out of 1,574.6 million dollars of our foreign trade circulation, 607.08 million or 38.55 percent in 1362 (1983); out of 1,554.530 million dollars or 44.16 percent of the country's foreign trade circulation in 1363 (1984) have taken place with the capitalist countries or non-barter zone countries.

CSO: 4600/530

AFGHANISTAN

EFFORTS BY TEXTILE UNION, MILLS PROVIDING BETTER SERVICE

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 17 Jun 85 p 4

[Text] One hundred twenty-one militant revolutionary and patriotic workers of the Afghan Textile Mills spare no efforts in order to enhance production of the enterprise.

The epic-making workers of the Mills by realizing their historical mission towards the homeland and Revolution, have joined the ranks of defence of the Revolution and have bravely and heroically struggled against the reactionary forces, those who dream of reversing the wheel of history and bringing back the times of the dark past.

These workers have understood that through realization of the objectives of the Revolution, tranquil and prosperous life can be achieved.

Nasir Ahmad, a worker of the knitting section and President of the Trade Union of the Mills, stating the above said that the Trade Union of the Mills established in 1979 as a centre for mobilizing workers, plays a useful and great part in betterment of the workers' life as well as upgrading the level of production.

As a result of the joint attention and endeavours of the Trade Union and the administration of the mills, the quality of the workers' food has considerably been increased and the health services have also been provided for the workers through health insurance on a free-of-charge basis.

In order to provide ever further facilities for the workers, a new modern dining room has been constructed.

Eighty workers of the Mills like hundreds of thousands of others throughout the country previously were deprived of learning as a result of the intentional policies of the past despotic and unpopular regimes, have been organized in literacy courses of the Mills set up with the cooperation of the administration and trade union of the enterprise. He added that since a long time the accord system has been introduced in the Mills through which the workers can earn more money against their extra work.

The Trade Union of the Mills tries its best to upgrade the level of the political awareness of the workers.

The pioneer and active workers of the Mills are appreciated and encouraged by the Trade Union and the administration of the Mills which results in the enhancement of the talents of the workers and increasing of the level of production.

CSO: 4600/532

AFGHANISTAN

AGRICULTURAL LOANS HELPING NATIONAL ECONOMY

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 16 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] The Agricultural Developmental Bank of the DRA is the sole institute granting agricultural credits and loans. The Bank plays a vital role in providing the institutions, individuals and others with long and short-term loans and agricultural credits which in its turn plays an important role in the development of the national economy.

The Bank started functioning in the year 1333 (1954) with 150 million Afs of capital. In the year 1348, in order to take more active part in the agricultural programmes the capital of the Bank was increased to 500 million Afghanis and it was entitled the Agricultural Development Bank. The present capital of the Bank which could now be called more appropriately as the "village bank" is over one billion Afghanis.

According to a spokesman of the Bank, the Bank offers three kinds of credits, namely, short-term, medium-term and long-term, to the agricultural cooperatives, peasants and livestock breeders.

The short-term loans are provided for one year with an annual interest of 10 percent. The medium-term credits are given for a duration of five years with interest of eight percent which is mainly used for the purchase of machinery, tractors and water pumps, etc. The long-term loans are provided for a duration of more than five years with eight percent annual interest. Such loans are mainly used for planting the gardens, vineyards and agricultural farms.

Likewise, the Bank sells agricultural equipments to the farmers and cooperatives. Moreover, the Bank assists the peasants' cooperative and other agricultural institutes with mobile workshops so to be able to replace their agricultural machinery.

The Bank by establishing its branches in various parts of the country is always at the service of the compatriots.

CSO: 4600/531

AFGHANISTAN

FARMERS RECEIVE BETTER AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 16 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] Strengthening agricultural sector for raising production level, improving living conditions of the peasants, livestock breeders and orcharders of the country is one of the major objectives of the party and revolutionary government.

For achieving this humane end, the Afghan Fertilizer and Agricultural Services Company is in the services of the farmers and orcharders providing them with the chemical fertilizers and agricultural pesticides. After the victory of the April Revolution, especially its new and evolutionary phase, the company has considerably expanded its activities and often exceeded the plan targets.

In the course of the preceding year, the Afghan Fertilizer and Agricultural Services Company has supplied the peasants and orcharders of the country with more than 14,000 tons of urea and phosphate fertilizers in all 29 provinces of the country, indicating a considerable increase comparing with the previous years.

Meanwhile, for improving the sowing wheat seeds and raising the level of the wheat crop more than eleven thousand tons of improved wheat seeds were distributed to the wheat growers of the country. Keeping in mind the urgency of using pesticides in agriculture, the Company has provided the peasants and livestock breeders with pesticides worth more than 95 million Afghanis last year alone, the President of the Afghan Fertilizers and Agricultural Services Company stated.

He added: "Fertilizers distributed by the Company are procured from within the country and also partially from the Soviet Union. Urea is produced locally, while phosphate bearing fertilizers and amuphos are imported from the Soviet Union and subsequently distributed to the peasants."

CSO: 4600/531

AFGHANISTAN

JOINT EFFORTS WITH SOVIETS PROVIDE NEEDED GOODS

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 15 Jun 85 p 4

[Text] Kabul (BIA)--The ASTRAS, Afghan-Soviet Joint-Stock Company loaded and unloaded 792 tons of goods needed by public during the last Afghan year (ended on March 20, 1985). This shows a 20 percent increase as compared with the preceding year.

As a result of hard work undertaken by workers and employees of the Company, the total volume of transport of imported commodities from the Soviet Union shows an increase of 62.4 percent in 1363 (the last Afghan year) as compared to the preceding year. The net profit from this reaches to 117 million Afghanis whereas the net profit of 1362 of the Company reached to 69.54 million Afghanis. An increase of 69.65 can be seen in the net profit of the Company.

1,409 ships, 9,440 wagons and 61,244 lorries were either loaded or unloaded by the Company during the last year.

The ASTRAS Company was established in 1361 (1982) with a capital of 70 million Afghanis in the framework of the Ministry of Commerce of the DRA. The Afghanistan's share is 60 percent and the Soviet Union's share is 40 percent.

As a result of tireless efforts exerted by the Afghan and Soviet employees, major changes have occurred in loading and unloading process in Hairatan Port. This has provided considerable assistance to public and private institutions.

The session of share-holders of the Company was held recently in Hairatan Port and reviewed the financial and operative activities of the Company and necessary decisions were adopted for further improvement of the loading and unloading process. The session also approved the budget of the Company for the year 1364 and decisions were taken for improvement of conditions of workers of the Company.

CSO: 4600/527

AFGHANISTAN

IMPLEMENTED REFORMS TO SOLVE WATER PROBLEM

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 25 Jun 85 p 2

[Text] A specifically worked out plan for democratic land and water reforms has been set forth and implemented. Hence, 689 peasantry committees of users of water have been set up in villages. In the same way, 906 superintendents for regulating and distributing water among water users have been chosen by water users themselves. Likewise, in 69 land reform operational groups, representatives of the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources were also cooperating. As a result of it 24,500 documents for fixing quotas of water users have been distributed.

Stating the above, a spokesman of the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources said, "In order to rebuild the irrigation system, offices for rehabilitation have been formed in Northern (Mazari-Sharif), South-Western (Helmand), Central (Kabul) and North-Eastern (Kunduz) zones. Worth mentioning among them are the reconstruction of the dam and canal of Joisheer and Khudaidad, head dam of Houdkhel and Alahuddin Joi, reservoir of Amir Ghazi dam, fortification of the exit part of Qargha Canal, Kabul city, reconstruction of the head dam of Nahre Shahi, Nahre Balkh, Nahre Siahgerd and Charbulak in Balkh Province, the construction of head dam of Adam Khel village, repair of Qalai Bust, Sarkar and Lashkare canals and cleaning of a number of streams and springs in Helmand Province, repair of Kama canal, construction of water pump stations in Nimroze Province, repairs and fortification of head dam of Nasrat stream in Farah, reconstruction of the head dam of Nahre Khuaja Khuram in Kapisa Province, construction of water pump stations in Unaba of Panjsheer district, repairs of Zard Kamre canal in Kunduz Province, construction of drainage system of Predgah in Fariab Province.

With the construction of the above head dams, water is being constantly supplied to land in those regions.

In the same way, in accordance with the decisions of the Council of Ministers of the DRA, specific plans are under way as a result of which 60 canals and head dams with a total volume of 10.056 million cu. m. of water have been cleaned and repaired in 12 cotton sowing provinces of the country.

Answering another question, he said, "In order to render assistance to people offices of irrigation have been set up in a number of districts and sub-districts."

He added, "In order to overcome the shortcomings, seminars are held from time to time in different provinces and some departmental heads of the Ministry have attended these seminars to point out the difficulties. Such trips have been undertaken to 20 provinces of the country so far.

New canals and head dams are constructed in the provinces through utilising modern means.

CSO: 4600/528

AFGHANISTAN

INCREASE REPORTED IN POWER, FERTILIZER PRODUCTION

Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 12 Jun 84 p 1

[Text] Thermo-Power and Chemical Fertilizer Plant of TPCFP of Mazar-i-Sharif plays a significant role in supplying peasants with chemical fertilizer and in meeting the needs of industrial institutions from the view point of power energy.

The workers of the plant, despite the plots of the counter-revolution, have shown distinction in accordance with party directives in raising the production level. They are endeavouring hard for the realization of the resolutions of the 15th plenum of the PDPA CC. In order to appreciate their tireless efforts, the honorary banner of the work competition along with a cash award of 300,000 Afghanis were given to them recently.

Stating the above, Sharifi, President of the Plant said in an interview, "The envisaged plan for the year 1363 (ended March 20, 1985) was 100,000 tons of urea fertilizer and 213 million KW electricity. But through the hard efforts of the workers and employees of the plant 120,506 tons of urea fertilizer and 230.9 million KW electricity were produced.

"These figures show an increase of 20.5 percent in the production of urea fertilizer and 8 percent in power generation, respectively."

He added, "105,482.5 tons of chemical fertilizer at a total cost of 675.142 million Afghanis have been supplied to the Afghan Chemical Fertilizer and Agricultural Services Company during the last year.

"Likewise, 18,760 tons of chemical fertilizer at a total cost of 105.08 million Afghanis has been exported to the Soviet Union during the said period.

"In the same way, the plant has earned 30,489 million Afghanis during the last year from the sale of 40.652 million KW power energy.

He further added "Workers of the plant also took an active part in the repair work of the plant in the beginning of the current year and did not let the plant remain idle for a long time."

CSO: 4600/528

AFGHANISTAN

BRIEFS

USSR HOUSING AID--Kabul (BIA)--An agreement for the supply of fittings, fixtures and appliances for houses and construction machinery was signed here yesterday between the Housing Pre-fabrication Factory of Kabul and the Technostroexport Firm of the Soviet Union. Under this agreement, the Soviet Union will supply to the DRA appliances and fittings worth 1.3 billion Afghanis (Afs 50 equal one US dollar) for the construction of a complex of modern multi-storeyed apartment blocks in Bibi Mahro area in Kabul. These materials will be used in the next three years by the Housing Pre-Fabrication Factory to build over 50 five-storeyed residential blocks, a poly-clinic, school, kindergarten, stores, cultural and other public utility buildings in the new residential complex. The new project, once completed, will provide accommodation for 90 thousand persons. [Text] [Kabul KABUL NEW TIMES in English 23 Jun 85 p 1]

CSO: 4600/532

BANGLADESH

UN DELEGATE REITERATES SUPPORT FOR NAMIBIA

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 14 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] Bangladesh on Thursday reiterated its firm support for and solidarity with the valiant people of Namibia in their just and legitimate struggle for freedom and national independence, reports BSS.

Participating in the UN Security Council debate on the situation in Namibia, Foreign Affairs Adviser Humayun Rasheed Chowdhury recalled that Namibia had been a unique responsibility of the UN for the last two decades and the international community must redouble its collective efforts to free the Namibian people from the yoke of colonialism on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the founding of the world body, a Foreign Office Press release said.

The Foreign Adviser expressed concern that nearly two decades after the termination of the mandate by the UN, the racist Pretoria regime was continuing with its illegal presence in Namibia through its abhorrent policies of repression, racism and racial discrimination based on apartheid.

Mr Chowdhury said that Bangladesh firmly believed that the Pretoria regime must be isolated. He said Bangladesh had maintained no relations whatsoever with the racist regime in any field and had consistently supported the call for a comprehensive mandatory sanction against South Africa.

Independence of Namibia is a shared international responsibility which cannot be held hostage to the resolution of the issues alien to the UN plan, he said.

Mr Chowdhury said that Bangladesh had condemned and rejected the latest attempt by the Pretoria regime to impose a neo-colonial settlement in Namibia through the so-called multi-party conference and install a puppet administration in Namibia.

Bangladesh had also denounced the continued plundering and indiscriminate exploitation of Namibian uranium and other resources by the racist regime in violation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the UN General

Assembly and Security Council. Bangladesh reiterated the call as contained in the decree, to all states to take legislative action to prevent exploitation, processing, transport and marketing of Namibian resources.

He paid tributes to the leaders of the "Front Line" states, who in the face of such unprovoked aggression and continued hostilities from the Pretoria regime had displayed utmost restraint and statesmanship.

He commended the leadership of SWAPO, the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people for extending their full cooperation in the implementation of the UN plan.

Meanwhile, Mr Chowdhury at a meeting with the SWAPO President Sam Nujoma in New York on Wednesday, expressed Bangladesh's solidarity with the Namibians in their struggle for independence.

He met the UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and held separate meetings with the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, the Communication Minister of Algeria who led their countries delegations at the debate.

The Adviser apprised the UN Secretary General of the ongoing relief and rehabilitation operation in the post-cyclone Bangladesh. The Secretary General assured him that the UN system would provide all possible assistance.

CSO: 4600/1729

5 August 1985

BANGLADESH

INDIANS RENEW BLOCKADE AROUND BORDER ENCLAVES

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 17 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] Rangpur, June 16--Indians again tightened blockade around Dahagram and Angorpota enclaves on the eve of Eid festival with a heinous motive to spoil observance of the festival of the enclave people.

According to information Indian civilians aided by Indian Border Security Forces, were guarding different exit points of enclaves and meantime they robbed some enclave residents of cash money and goods while they attempted to go to Indian Mekliganj bazar and Dhaprahat recently.

One Abu Taleb of Dahagram enclave few days back anyhow managed to go to Mekliganj bazar for selling sixty kilogram tobacco with a hope to purchase cloths and other essentials for Eid festival.

But the Indians looted away his entire tobacco at Mekliganj bazar and also beat him up mercilessly.

Similary, one Majid Akbar Golam Mostafa and Salam Munshi alone with many others, faced inhuman harassment in hands of Indians while they came out from enclave under cover of darkness at night to go to Mekliganj market to purchase cloths and other goods there.

CSO: 4600/1732

BANGLADESH

15-PARTY ALLIANCE CONDEMNS KILLING OF BAKSAL LEADER

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 13 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] The 15-party alliance condemned on Wednesday the brutal killings of Mr Ekhlashuddin Ahmed, a former MP and his eldest son in broad daylight on Tuesday by miscreants in Narail.

In a statement issued to the Press, the leaders of the alliance termed the killings as being politically motivated and demanded an impartial enquiry into the killings.

They recalled the contributions of Ekhlashuddin to the war of Liberation.

The signatories to the statement included Sheikh Hasina, Mrs Sajeda Chowdhury, Mr Mohiuddin Ahmed, Mr Abdur Razzak, Mr Moni Singh, Mr Mohammad Farhad Mirna Sultan Raza, Mr Shahjahan Siraj, Prof Muzaffar Ahmed, Pir Habibur Rahman Chowdhury, Haroonur Rashid, Mr Pankaj Bhattacharjee, Syed Altaf Hossain, Mr Abdul Halim, Mr Mohammad Toaha, Mr Abdur Rouf, Mr Nazrul Islam, Mr Rashed Khan Menon, Mr Kalequzzaman Bhuyian, Mr Abdullah Sarkar, Mr Siddiqur Rahman, Mr Nirmal Sen, Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish, Mr Abdus Samad, Mr Ali Abbas, Mr Dilip Barua, Mr Mahbubul Huq, Mr Mohiuddin Khan Badal, Mr Abul Bashar and Mr Shah Alam.

Separate statements condemning the killings of Mr Ekhlashuddin Ahmed and his eldest son were issued by the leaders of Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal (Raza) and leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Mukhtijoddah Sangshad also condemned the killings and demanded exemplary punishment for those responsible for such killings. In a statement issued to the Press Al-haj Md Giasuddin Bir Pratik and Mr S.A.M.M. Illiyas, Secretary-General and Secretary (Publicity and Publications) of the Sangshad, expressed their deep sympathies to the members of the bereaved family. They also demanded that the Government should make all arrangements for proper treatment of Col (Retd) Zafar Imam who sustained severe injuries recently in an accident in the cyclone-hit areas.

CSO: 4600/1725

5 August 1985

BANGLADESH

ERSHAD MEETS PRESS ON DEPARTURE FOR SINGAPORE

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 15 Jun 85 pp 1, 12

[Text] President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Lt Gen H.M. Ershad on Friday disclosed that he would soon start political dialogue with opposition parties to forge a "greater political understanding" for immediate democratic transition through national elections. He hoped that the political leaders would seize this offer from him.

Talking to newsmen at Zia International Airport before leaving for Seoul and Tokyo on state visits, President Ershad said that his Government would consider withdrawal of restrictions on political activities after the Eid-ul-Fitr. He informed that no date for allowing political activities--either indoor or outdoor had yet been fixed.

The President, however, admitted that there had to be political activities again and fresh political dialogue to reach a greater political understanding on national elections. Our only objective is to hold elections through a greater political consensus, he asserted.

In reply to a question which election--presidential or parliamentary--will be held first, the President said that it would be decided in the dialogue with the political parties. "I have an open mind on this issue," he added. He told newsmen that he had got the mandate of the people to remain as President till the national elections were over.

The President hoped that the political leaders would come forward this time to decide on the elections. He said that the greater national interest was his only objective.

Asked whether he will offer any fresh concessions to the Opposition, the President said "Surely, if it becomes necessary in view of the dialogue." He expressed optimism that the political leaders would respond to his call for a greater political understanding.

On the question of releasing all political prisoners, the President said that the Ministry of Home Affairs was considering the cases. "All arrested on political grounds will be released," he gave a categorical assurance.

Asked about his comment on a recent interview with an international news agency regarding formation of a political front, the President said: "I want a greater political consensus and if those who believe in my ideology and philosophy come forward to strengthen my hands I shall heartily welcome them." "My philosophy and ideology is the politics of production," was the reply of the President when asked about his political views.

In reply to a question if he would forget what happened in the past and start anew with the Opposition, the President said that he wanted to start afresh as the "last chapter I initiated ended in special circumstances." He added, "I want to start with an open mind and with the hope that I shall get cooperation from all in returning to democracy."

Referring to upazila elections, the President said that it was held on non-party basis. He categorically denied of supporting any group or individual. He, however, admitted that he was reported about the use of his photographs by some candidates. He said that anyone who used his photograph did so out of love for him.

Expanded Cabinet Soon

Asked what is the prospect of expanding the Cabinet, the President came with a prompt reply "prospect is bright." He also indicated that expansion of the Cabinet will be done "very soon."

Earlier in his written statement, the President said that he was feeling distressed to leave country at a time when the relief operations in the cyclone affected areas were still continuing. He also regretted that he would have to celebrate the Eid abroad far away from his people.

He said that he was going for the state visits for a greater national interest. "My heart will remain with my people here," he added.

President Ershad said that during his five-day state visit to South Korea he would explore new avenues of friendship and cooperation between Dhaka and Seoul. He said that he would discuss bilateral and international issues with the President, Prime Minister and other leaders in Seoul.

The President termed the Dhaka-Seoul relations as "fast growing" and noted with satisfaction that the Republic of Korea was keen to invest in Bangladesh.

Referring to his four-day state visit to Japan beginning from June 19, President Ershad said that Japan was one of the main donor countries who substantially helped the economic development of Bangladesh by extending grants, project and commodity aids as well as technical assistance. He observed that Dhaka-Tokyo relations had been growing fruitfully and encouragingly. He mentioned about the Japan-Bangladesh joint committee for promoting trade and economic cooperation.

President Ershad said that in Tokyo he will call on the Emperor and discuss matters of bilateral and global issues with Prime Minister Nakasone whom he met in New Delhi seven months back.

The President was given a guard of honour at the airport. Deputy Chief Marshal Law Administrators Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed and Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmood, Cabinet members and high-ranking civil and military officials were present at the airport to see the President off.

The President was accompanied by Begum Roushan Ershad and his only son. The 36-member Presidential entourage included Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister Anwar Hossain, Foreign Adviser Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, eight senior officials, five businessmen and the editor of the Dainik Bangla Mr Ahmed Humayun.

The President will return home on June 23.

CSO: 4600/1731

BANGLADESH

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETS, DECIDES ON ANNUAL PLAN

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 14 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] The size of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) including estimated project aid disbursement, sectoral allocations and project selections for the financial year 1985-86 was discussed at an extended meeting of the Planning Commission held in Dhaka on Thursday, reports BSS.

The meeting presided over by President H.M. Ershad also took necessary decisions in this regard.

The ADP for 1985-86 will now be finalised by the Planning Commission on the basis of the decisions taken in the meeting and will be placed before the NEC for final approval. After the approval it will be integrated with the national budget which will be announced on the eve of the new financial year.

The meeting was attended, among others, by DCMLA and Minister for Communication, Irrigation, Flood Control and Water Resources, Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmad, DCMLA and Minister for Industries, Commerce, Jute and Textiles, Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud, Minister for Planning Dr A. Majeed Khan, Finance Adviser Mr Syeduzzaman, Members of the Planning Commission, PSO to the CMLA and high officials of the concerned ministries.

Objective Plan

The Third Five-Year Plan envisaging a financial dimension of Taka 40 billion is being finalised with the sectoral work having almost been completed.

The Planning Minister Dr A. Majeed Khan told BSS. He said the overall objective plan which is being formulated on a continuous variable model was to bring down the poverty level. 'Hopefully it is going to be vibrant and dynamic,' he said. The next fiscal year beginning 1st July is the first year of the 3rd Five-Year Plan.

Dr Khan said the plan which is being formulated on a new methodology--a deviation from the input-output model on the basis of which previous plans were worked out--would at the end of its period leave an adequate base for development both in terms of economic and human aspects.

Efforts are underway to mobilise finance both from external and domestic sources to implement the plan, he added.

He said the plan had been modeled keeping in mind its effect on the various socio-economic groups, structural change and finally its impact on the equity, social structure and overall economic growth.

The Minister pointed out that one of the major objectives of the plan was to diversify the rural economy. He observed that the present agro-society was too preoccupied with farming of food crop production.

The diversification would mean stress on cultivation of subsidiary agricultural products like vegetables and edible oil seeds and pisciculture, poultry, livestock, he said adding the diversification would result in the growth of mini industrialisation in the rural areas and creation of employment opportunities.

The other priority of the plan is on laying out the network of facilities and infrastructure through expansion of power generation, energy distribution, industrial development, education and family planning, he said.

The Planning Minister said the number of new projects in the Third Five-Year Plan were very low since the stress is on completion of the ongoing projects. About 600 projects of the Second Five-Year Plan were being carried over for completion during the next five-year plan period, he said.

Dr Khan said "we expect to attain food self-sufficiency, raise export volume and expand the energy distribution and power generation.

He said the plan also aimed at attaining self-sufficiency in fertilizer and edible oil and considerable advancement in cotton cultivation.

The plan also targets to bring consolidation of primary education and enabling the government to launch compulsory primary education from the Fourth Five-Year Plan period, Dr Khan said.

He said the thrust of the plan was to go for higher level of utilisation of the current facilities at least at the level of 80 percent. The other major objective of the plan was to reduce dependence on foreign aid and to strengthen the measure for internal resource mobilisation.

The Minister said the entire plan was being formulated keeping in mind the Perspective Plan of attaining economic growth at five percent, hundred percent literacy, zero population growth rate and substantial growth in GDP and attaining per capita income of 360 dollars by 2000 AD.

CSO: 4600/1729

BANGLADESH

COUNTRY'S BALANCE OF PAYMENTS SITUATION TERMED BLEAK

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 14 Jun 85 pp 1, 10

[Article by Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury]

[Text] Different international agencies including the World Bank predict the balance of payments outlook of Bangladesh for 1986 and 1987 fiscal years as bleak due to sharp declining trend in the country's foreign exchange reserves, sudden slump in workers' remittances and growing pressures on debt services obligations.

These agencies also forecast that the recent welcome resurgence of activities in the industrial sector may be constrained during the coming years by an increasingly serious shortage of foreign exchange. Their reports indicate a very tight constraint on the capacity for non-food imports throughout the Third Five-Year Plan (1985-90) with a particularly difficult situation foreseen for the '86 and '87 financial years.

The balance of payments position of the country is characterised by massive structural trade deficit and a corresponding heavy dependence on external aid. The export earnings cover only about one-third of the country's import requirements and the country's dependence on foreign aid is so much that in 1984 foreign aid disbursements accounted for 40 percent of the total Government resources, about 50 percent of the total investment and close to 55 percent of import payments.

The seriousness of the country's balance of payments difficulties is evidenced by the rapid decline in foreign exchange reserves which fell by more than 150 million dollar from their March peak to a level of about 400 million dollar by the end of December last year. The foreign exchange reserves are projected to decline further to around 360 million dollar by July next which will represent no more than six to seven weeks' coverage of imports. The financial experts warn that these will be no further margin for running down the foreign exchange reserves in 1986 which promises to be a very difficult year for balance of payments management.

Debt-service Ratio May Exceed 20 p.c.

Debt service obligations will not only add to balance of payments pressures during '86 and '87 but also preclude the option of any significant resort to short-term commercial borrowing to ease balance of payments pressures during the next two years. The debt service ratio for the next two years has been forecast to be over 20 percent due to the combination of repayment of the past aid loans obligations to the IMF and repayment of debt incurred for foodgrain imports in 1984-85 on a deferred payment basis. The obligation to IMF alone during the next two years will be over SDR 100 million.

The international monetary agencies observe that for the foreseeable future there will be very strict limits on the country's credit worthiness due to the low volume and the high concentration of the composition of exports the relatively uncertain future of the workers remittances and already relatively high debt service obligations. They kept no scope for any net commercial borrowings during the next five years by Bangladesh.

Compounding the pressure on the balance of payments the inflow of workers' remittances that became the country's second largest source of foreign exchange (after jute and jute products) continued to decline since that latter part of last year. The remittances which averaged over 50 million dollars per month in the first half of 1984 and 46 million dollar per month in the first half of the current year. The projected level of remittances in 1985 is 450 million dollar compared to over 600 million dollar in 83 and over 550 million dollar last year.

The debt incurred to foot the bill of foodgrain imports during 1984-85 will increase the difficulty of medium term balance of payments management. Foodgrain imports last year amounted to about 400 million dollar of which about 280 million dollar was aid financed to prevent a potential food crisis and replenish the low foodgrain stocks the government bought foodgrains worth 60 million dollar in open market. In addition foodgrain imports of almost 200 million dollar have been contracted on a deferred payment basis and this debt is due to be repaid from 86 to 88.

Food Aid Volume on Decline

The aid experts apprehend that the volume of food aid to Bangladesh is assumed to decline from the high levels which are needed in '85 and '86 to help rebuild foodgrain stocks after the recent floods, cyclone and tidal bore. They foresee cash deficits in the country's food budget for the next two years. They observe that if the food aid declined then cash deficit of the food budget would widen to about Taka 1.5 billion by the end of the Third Five Year Plan. This situation can be more acute with further serious weather related disruptions to agricultural production.

Even in "high case" scenario based on optimistic yet not implausible assumptions regarding key balance of payments variables like exports, foodgrain imports, remittances and disbursement of foreign aid, the country's capacity for imports will remain very limited during the next

five years. The total imports are not projected to recover to their 1985 levels in nominal terms until 1987 and it will be still lower in real terms in 1990 than they were in 1985. The capacity for non-food imports will be strictly limited and the average growth of such imports during 1985-90 will be around 1.5 percent in real terms. This severe constraint on the capacity to import will also limit the scope for increasing non-agricultural GDP over the Third Five-Year Plan.

The country's balance of payments position started deteriorating since the last quarter of 1984 posing a serious challenge for the short and medium term economic Management. To combat this situation the Government took certain measures which include the upward adjustment of key interest rates, the setting of strict limits on domestic credit for the remainder of 1985, minor adjustments of the official and Wage Earners Scheme (WES) market exchange rates and a downward revision of the ADP for 1984-85 fiscal year. But financial experts believe that such macro economic policies of the Government will not be sufficient to avoid a seriously constrained balance of payments situation in 1986.

They observe that the capital inflows must rise substantially in both 1986 and '87 financial years if a serious disruption to the flow of necessary imports are to be avoided. The financial experts recommend that Government should seek to supplement development assistance with special balance of payments support during the next two years. Aid disbursements need to increase substantially in the next two years to avoid an undesirable and unwelcome decline in the country's capacity for imports. In view of the constrained balance of payments situation forecast for the next year, it is vital that commodity aid commitments should exceed project aids. To avoid any serious balance of payments problems next year experts suggest commodity aid commitments should not be less than 575 million dollar.

CSO: 4600/1727

BANGLADESH

BANKS REPORTED IN SEVERE FINANCIAL CRISIS

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 9 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Moazzem Hossain]

[Text] Poor and inefficient project portfolio management by Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) and Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) have made the prospects for fresh fund lineup with the external donors like the World Bank (W.B.) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) quite uncertain.

The donors have made it quite clear that no new funds will be given to the country's two industrial development financing institutions if their loan recovery performance does not improve at least by 50 percent of long overdues.

Both BSB and BSRS have failed to fulfil their loan recovery targets for the current fiscal year (1984-85). In BSRS's case the recovery figure stood at Taka 22 crore during July-May period of 1984-85. The annual target for recovery by BSRS for the year was set at over Taka 65 crores. The performance of BSB is no better and the recovery during the current fiscal year which ends in the current financial year will not exceed 40 percent of the target, according to a rough estimate.

Both BSRS and BSB are now locked up in a severe financial crisis. BSRS has not sanctioned any loans to the sponsors of new industrial projects over the last eleven months since July '84. BSB's operations for sanctions of new industrial loans have also come to a virtual standstill.

Private investments in new industrial ventures or projects with the financial support of BSB and BSRS have been minimal during 1984-85. This has tended to frustrate the major goal of having an accelerated pace in new private industrial investments under the new industrial policy.

The cumulative long overdues of BSB and BSRS stood at about Taka 400 crores in June last, involving a total of about 1300 projects. The latest amendments to exchange-rate absorption scheme (EFAS) will however, bring down the amount of overdues realisable from the borrowers from BSB and BSRS by about Taka 100 crores. The final estimate in this context is yet to be completed by the two development financial institutions.

Both BSB and BSRS have intimated their borrowers to exercise their options in favour of either original EFAS or amended EFAS by June 85. Those borrowers who had earlier exercised their option by March 31 last have only been asked by the two financial institutions about the new alternatives under the latest amendments to EFAS. The time limit for exercise of option under the original EFAS or the amended EFAS will not be extended to those borrowers who had not earlier done so, according to BSRS and BSR sources.

Under the latest amendments to EFAS, the unexpired (not due) principal foreign currency loan as on June 30 last will be converted into a local currency loan by applying the rate of exchange prevalent on that date. The original EFAS provided for conversion of the unexpired (not due) principal foreign currency loan into a local currency loan by applying the rate of exchange prevalent on June 30, '82. The amended EFAS offers the benefits of ten percent remission of Excess Exchange Rate Burden (EERB) for the borrowers but the original EFAS had no such scope for remission.

Under the amended EFAS, the overdues in respect of the foreign currency loan will be recalculated after applying the rate of exchange prevalent as on each due date for payment and the loans thus converted into local currency will carry the rate of interest under original contractual terms, not the prevalent rate of interest for normal bank borrowings. In the original EFAS, the overdues of foreign currency loans as on June 30, '82 were to be converted into a Taka loan by applying the rate of exchange prevalent on that date.

The amendments to the EFAS will necessitate the redrawing of the already audited balance sheets of the two industrial development financial institutions. Both the levels of earlier announced profits and overdues of BSB and BSRS will have to be recalculated according to BSRS and BSB sources.

Meanwhile, an action program for restructuring of BSB and BSRS is under consideration of the Ministry of Finance. After the action programme is approved, specific time-frame will be set for the reorganisation of the two financial institutions in accordance with the memorandum of understanding reached between the Government and the donors following extensive discussions on the future institutional roles of BSB and BSRS in Dhaka in March last. A high official of the Ministry of Finance told this correspondent that no specific deadline was set earlier in the memorandum of understanding for the reorganisation of the two financial institutions.

CSO: 4600/1719

BANGLADESH

DHAKA, TOKYO EXCHANGE NOTES ON COMMODITY LOAN

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 8 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text]

Japan will provide 27 billion yen (about Tk 270 crore) to Bangladesh as commodity and project loans under an exchange of notes signed in Dhaka yesterday between the two governments, reports BSS.

Both loans will be made available for utilisation after signing the formal agreement to be signed later in Tokyo between Bangladesh and the Overseas Economy Cooperation Fund (OECF).

The 16.07 billion yen (about Taka 160.70 crore, commodity loan will have to be disbursed within two years after signing the agreement. It will be used for the procurement of a wide variety of items like industrial raw materials and spares, equipments machineries, chemicals, fertilizers, cement and raw cotton etc, from all the OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries and LDCS excluding Bangladesh. The major portion of the commodity loan be allocated to different agencies both in private and public sectors.

The loans to be paid back in 30 years, will bear 1.25 per cent interest rate, the softest rate being offered by Japan to developing countries.

Out of the project loan of 10.93 billion yen (about Taka 109.3 crore) for the implementation of three development projects, 7.51 billion yen will be utilised by Bangladesh Power Development Board for the 100 MW landbased gas turbine plant at Siddhirganj for improving power supply in country. The balance of the project loan will be utilised by Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board for telecommunication network expansion project including expansion of microwave system and expansion of telex system.

The project loan which is partially tied, will have to be disbursed within five years.

The total loan from Japan to Bangladesh since 1974 including this exchange of note now stands at 264.005 billion yen both in commodity and project sectors. Tokyo's grant to Dhaka since 1971 is 94.430 billion yen.

The exchange of notes was signed by Mr. Munir-uz Zaman, Secretary, External Resources Division and Mr. Yoshitomo Tanaka, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh on behalf of their governments.

CSO: 4600/1718

5 August 1985

BANGLADESH

BEGUM ZIA MEETS PRESS ON RETURN FROM DISASTER AREA

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 17 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] Begum Khaleda Zia on Sunday said that effective measures should be taken to flush out saline water immediately from the cyclone and tidal surge hit areas to facilitate the cultivation of Aman crop there.

Begum Zia was addressing a Press conference at her party office on her return from the visit of the affected areas. She said unless the coming Aman cultivation was ensured with appropriate measure right now, the people there would have to face difficulties in the near future.

She warned that at least three times more than the number of people killed in recent cyclone and tidal surge will die from hunger if measures to remove the salinity from land are not taken.

She urged the Government to provide agricultural inputs free of cost to the cyclone-affected people in the coastal area so that they could start cultivation of Aman immediately.

Begum Zia was flanked by former Speaker Mirza Golam Hafiz, Begum Farida Rahman, Mr Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Barrister Rafiqullah Mia and Mr Ahmed Nazir at the Press conference.

Giving her reaction on the relief operation by the Government and its rehabilitation programme, Begum Khaleda Zia said that prominence was given in the media only to Urir Char where only six thousand people died. But there are other places where none could visit and no relief materials were distributed among the affected people. She asked the Government agencies to immediately pay attention to them and save them from hunger and diseases. She said cholera had spread in epidemic form in those affected areas.

Begum Zia said that she distributed medicine, biscuits and clothes among the affected people and survivors. She said that relief goods including 32 tube wells worth Taka three lakh were distributed among the survivors.

Begum Zia suggested that all educational institutions including madrasahs and mosques should immediately be repaired and rebuilt so that they could provide shelter to the people during the cyclone. Sluice gate and embankments around the islands should be rebuilt without delay.

The Cargil Bridge which links the upazila administrative centre with the rest of Sandwip collapsed in the cyclone. Unless restored it will continue to cause great inconvenience to the people in this island, Begum Zia said.

She also urged the authorities to link Sandwip with Urir Char and other adjoining islets by a cross dam proposed earlier. She also recalled the projects under the erstwhile offshore Island Development Board and the Dutch collaboration in this respect.

Begum Zia called upon all to ensure fair distribution of the relief materials to the affected people. More tube wells should be sunk for safe drinking water without which threats of epidemic will loom large, she pointed out.

While narrating her recent visit to Sandwip, Urir Char, Char Clark and other affected coastal area, she said those unfortunate sisters and brethren should be helped by all of us in whatever way it was possible.

Replying to a question she said the visit by Prime Minister Gandhi, President Jayawardene, President Ziaul Huq and Princess Ashi of Bhutan very amply demonstrated the very seed of strength SARC had in it. Moreover, their humanitarian gesture towards our people would be long remembered, she said.

CSO: 4600/1732

BANGLADESH

MINISTER TELLS OF AID PROGRAM FOR STRICKEN AREA

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 11 Jun 85 p 1

[Text] The Government was undertaking a massive agricultural rehabilitation programme to compensate the crop damage caused by the recent cyclone that hit the coastal areas of the country, reports BSS.

This was stated by Food Minister Major General Mahabba Jan Chowdhury, while reviewing post cyclone relief activities at Sandwip and Hatiya with upazila Chairmen, members of Union Parishads and Government officials.

General Chowdhury said the Government has decided to provide seeds, fertilizers free of cost to the most affected and distressed farmers to augment coming Aman crop in the affected areas.

The Minister went on a hectic tour of the cyclone battered areas and visited Bhola, Monpura, Hatiya, Urir Char and Sandwip. He was accompanied by Mr Abidur Rahman, Additional Secretary in-charge of Relief, Major General (Retd) M.A. Jabbar, Chairman, Bangladesh Red Cross and a delegation of Swedish disaster relief team.

During the review meetings, problems like repair of embankments, supply of cattle, seed, fertilizer and house building loan and exemption of interest on agriculture loan came up for discussion.

The Minister told the gathering that all possible assistance will be given to the needy to mitigate their sufferings and help them stand on their own feet.

The Food Minister said that the government has already launched two special programmes--special Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme and special test relief programme to help mother and children and able bodied males respectively.

The Minister told the elected representatives and officials to prepare projects for the repair of embankments and do those through the special test relief programme.

Turning to house building and construction of shelters, the Minister said substantial amount of cash and C.I. sheets have been allocated for this purpose.

At a similar meeting at Hatiya, the people informed the Minister that cyclone shelters and warning through megaphones had helped many to save their lives. They requested the Minister to expand cyclone preparedness programme in all the coastal areas.

The UNO, Hatiya, informed the Minister that 70-80 percent of thatched houses damaged during the cyclone have already been rebuilt on self-help basis. The UNO said 22 relief teams including NGOs are working there.

During his visit to Urir Char, the Minister was informed by the ZMLA that armed forces personnel have already built 200 temporary shelters. In all 670 shelters will be constructed there, he was informed.

The Minister said that the government was contemplating to build permanent houses in cluster form in Urir Char by erecting high rise embankment.

During the visit, General Jabbar went to camps organised by Red Cross where, besides relief goods, water purifying tablets are being distributed among the people.

CSO: 4600/1723

BANGLADESH

PAPERS REPORT ON AFTERMATH OF FLOOD DISASTER

'Desolate Island' Described

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 8 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Abu Sadeque]

[Text]

BHOLA, June 7:—A pall of gloom now hangs over Manpura worst hit island in the entire coastal belt of Khulna Division severely ravaged by the cyclonic and tidal bore on May 24.

Though the death toll was not as high as those in other places of the coastal area of the country the entire island has been virtually turned into a desolate place with hardly any structure remained standing. Except some pucca structures at the upazila headquarters of the island almost all dwelling huts and trees all over the island were raged to the ground. Hundreds of cattle and other belongings of the affected people were swept away in the swirling wave of the tidal bore and the storm which lashed the island with great fury. Even the concrete structure of the cyclone shelters where most of the islanders took shelter during the storm was trembling, said Md. Yusuf a staff of the Power Development Board who is working at a small power house at the upazila. The PDB staff said that we all presumed to be swept away and a mortal cry from the hapless men, women and children rent the air. It was a sheer luck and a help of Allah that we escaped the death, he said.

Recounting the nightmarish experience of the fateful night, he said that after 12 midnight the wind started blowing at a terrified speed with 10 ft. high tidal water which swept the entire island. Most of the live-

stocks were swept away with dwelling huts and household belongings of the island. Many islanders who went on a fishing in the sea were believed to have been swept away in the tidal wave as they could not come ashore in time before the storm. He thought that the number of deaths in the cat astrophe will be much more in the island as the bodies were swept away to the sea.

Meanwhile many of the islanders living in areas far off the upazila headquarters could not receive the storm warning signal well ahead of time and consequently the people of these areas could not take proper precautionary measures before the cyclone struck the island, it is gathered. With a total population of about 45 thousand the island consisted of three unions. Most of the people living there are agriculturists and fishermen. As the disaster has levelled their huts and take away everything the islanders are struggling hard for bare existence. Everyday they are rushing to the upazila headquarters for relief which is inadequate to meet their needs. Most of the roads inside the island have been washed away and as a result the relief goods could not be transported to the people living in the far flung areas of the island. Immediate measures are needed to place some sea going vessels at the disposal of

the upazila administration to send succour to the cyclone victims in distant areas of the island. Otherwise the cyclone victims of these areas will starve to death.

Meanwhile an unconfirmed report said that a sea going vessel "Moheskhal" of BWITC which was pressed into service for carrying relief goods from mainland to Monpura on May 31 has been lying anchored at a channel near Monpura for the last few days for some mechanical troubles.

The UNO Monpura Upazila Mr. Ranjit Kumar Gharai whom I interviewed on Wednesday said that sufficient relief materials are reaching the upazila but its proper distribution among the cyclone victims has become a great problem for the local administration due to non-availability of any sea worthy vessel. He said that most of the roads in the island have been washed away or severely damaged by the cyclone and many areas are still submerged under water. If the fast moving water transports are not placed at the disposal of local administration it will be a difficult task to send relief goods to far off places in the island which are almost inaccessible in these days of the season when sea remains rough and turbulent.

Formerly a part of Trizamuddin upazila of Bhola Monpura with a total land area of 75 sq. miles was turned into a police station in 1971. In 1983 it was upgraded into a separate upazila with its head quarters at Hazirhat Char Nizam a small char with an estimated population of one thousand is also a part of this island though it is situated about 30 miles to the south from Manpura.

Being agriculturally prosperous the islanders eke out their living by working in the fields and fishing in the sea, most of the islanders do not own any land as most of the land belong to jotedars who usually stay in the mainland of Bhola. The islanders till the land as share croppers. Consequently they chronically suffer from poverty and hardship which writ large on their faces. The island was completely ravaged by the cyclone in 1970 when thousands of people lost their lives. The same disaster now

befell on the island throwing all of its people into a desperate struggle for survival.

Since it is situated just in the midst of the mighty Meghna where sea meets the river the island remains cut off from the mainland throughout the rainy season when ferrying across the river by boats or small motor launches becomes a herculean task because of high waves and rough weather. This problem of communications in maintaining link with the mainland of Bhola has long been a sore point with the islanders. But so far nothing has been done in this direction. A ferry service equipped with sea worthy vessels is needed to be introduced between the island and the mainland to remove the longfelt demand of the islanders who have long been deprived of the bare facilities of life.

Though the island has been turned into a police station and subsequently into an upazila long ago there is no proper accommodation for the officers staff and offices of various departments at the upazila headquarters. All the officers and their offices have been accommodated in kucha huts and tinsheds most of which were destroyed by the cyclone. There is also no building for UNO and courts. Because of lack of accommodation no Munsif could be posted there and as a result civil court of the island is functioning at Bhola which causes great inconvenience to the litigant public. There is an upazila medical complex functioning in the island but there is no building for the complex. Most of the medical staff and officers posted there always remain out of the stations. The upazila health administrator along with another medical officer were out of station when the cyclone struck the island. A wireless set placed there under the cyclone preparedness programme of Relief and Rehabilitation Ministry in the island could not work well as the set always remain out of order. As it is surrounded by the sea the island is exposed to tidal waters which submerge fertile land of the island causing widespread damage to standing crops. An embankment around the island is needed to protect it from saline inundation.

Island Returning to 'Normal'

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 8 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text]

URIR CHAR, June 7:--Absorbing the initial shock of sorrows grief and tragedies wrought by the cyclonic storm and tidal surge on May 24 the people of this tiny island of Urir Char are now settling to normal life with courage and fortitude nurturing a hope of 'bright days' ahead.

Living in a geographic isolation off the coastal belt in the Bay of Bengal about six hundred families of the islet who have survived the havoc of natural disaster are now engaged in organising their families and making the best efforts to settle down there instead of migrating to other places of the country.

Talking to the BSS correspondent the survivors categorically said that they are going to stay back on the islet where their near and dear ones are lying in eternal peace. The erosion of the northern tip of Sandwip had left us with nothing and we have nothing to look back upon. Our past and our future is linked with Urir Char and so

we have no alternative but to resettle our lives on this islet' they said.

Urir Char a land mass that surfaced almost at the sea-level in the Bay close to Sandwip some ten years ago has an area of 30 to 40 square miles. A part of a huge land mass that are forming in the Bay along the Bangladesh coastal belt Urir Char goes under water during high tide and surfaces during ebb tide. Scattered man-made raised earthen platforms having homestead of the inhabitants on it bears the location of the island during high tide.

As one fly low over the islet, it seems that small village homesteads are floating in the Bay.

The only crop that are being produced in abundance on the islet is post winter aus. The bumper harvest of aus during the last three years was another element of attracting more settlers to this islet which is officially under the afforestation programme.

Shelters of Little Use

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 10 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Article by Syed Murtaza Ali]

[Text]

CHITTAGONG June 9:--Most cyclone centres in the off-shore islands and coastal belt of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts were of no use for the people who sought shelter there during cyclone and tidal bore of May 24 night.

These multi-storied buildings without windows doors and other fittings now stand in a pitiable condition. As a result the majority of people felt their dwelling houses were safer than those shelters.

Few people who took shelter at these centres could not avert the calamity much as the wind and rain continuously pounded them through the open windows and doors. The centres could only be effective to shelter cattle

These centres were constructed twelve years ago under a credit of International Development Agency (IDA). The Public Works Department carried out the construction work. These centres later made over to the Education Department for utilisation as education centres. After that no body looked after its maintenance nor kept any information of its condition. The local unscrupulous people gradually removed the fittings.

There were previously a number of cyclone shelter construction divisions of PWD headed by an Executive Engineer. These divisions looked after its maintenance for some time. Later these divisions were abolished and their work divided

and passed over to different building divisions of PWD.

A PWD Executive Engineer whose division took over works of cyclone shelter construction when contacted today could not even give the number of cyclone centres under his disposal. He could not even trace the files of these centres. The Executive Engineer conceded that emergency work should be taken up to repair these centres.

The cyclone preparedness programme under Bangladesh Red Cross Society maintain a dozen earthen-built centres in off-shore islands and coastal belt of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts.

These centres are also badly maintained. Most of these centres

were built under Food for Works Programme. Since these centres are devoid of overhead roof the people use them for sheltering their cattle at the hour of calamities.

The cyclone preparedness programme had a scheme of building two centres at Urir Char island under Food for Works Programme. The work of these two new mud built centres were scheduled to be completed in April this year. But the Ministry of Food and Relief was delaying the release of wheat to undertake the works it is alleged. The timely completion of works could have helped save lives of several hundred people in Urir Char island observers opined.

CSO: 4600/1717

BANGLADESH

HASINA MEETS PRESS AFTER TOUR OF DISASTER AREA

Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 8 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text]

Sheikh Hasina Wazed, President, Bangladesh Awami League, yesterday said the whole nation should unitedly work for redressing the sufferings of the people affected by last month's natural calamity, reports BSS.

Addressing the press at her father's Dhanmandi residence here yesterday Sheikh Hasina, called for immediate declaration of cyclone and tidal surge areas as a 'disaster zone'.

Sheikh Hasina who had visited the cyclone and tidal wave battered areas, pointed out that official relief has yet to reach many remote areas. She urged fair distribution of relief goods received from both home and abroad so that the real needy could get those.

She hoped that all relief activities would be conducted on humanitarian basis.

The Awami League chief urged to take all possible steps to prevent diarrhoeal diseases and ensure supply of pure drinking water in the affected areas. She said adequate house building materials, supply of seeds and agricultural loans are also necessary for those areas.

Referring to the future security of the people of coastal area and off-shore islands, she suggested expeditious actions to execute disaster preparedness programme taken by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government. She said afforestation in the coastal belt and construction of Sandwip cross dam should be taken up on an emergency basis.

Replying to a question, Sheikh Hasina said the government should come out with a complete picture of destruction including the total number of deaths.

Replying to another question, she said, "we welcome the gesture of goodwill and friendship" shown by Rajiv Gandhi, Jayewardene and Ziaul Haq and the Bhutanese Princess in our hour of distress.

ENA adds: Sheikh Hasina did not mention President Ziaul Haq's name while she was thanking other regional leaders for the visit. When a reporter asked whether she would thank President Ziaul Haq of Pakistan she said, "yes, I will."

Sheikh Hasina, however, said President Ziaul Haq's appeal to Pakistani citizens to donate one rupee each for Bangladesh cyclone victims sounds like giving charity.

"We do not want any charity from Pakistan. Pakistan should give us our due share of assets," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said the mass graves that had to be dug for the recent cyclone deaths reminds the people of Bangladesh of the mass graves of 1971 when the Bengalee nation was fighting for its independence. Sheikh Hasina expressed the hope that relief activities will be conducted from humanitarian point of view instead of making it a 'tool of propaganda' only.

Sheikh Hasina said people in the affected areas complained that they did not get the accu-

rate warning about the cyclone in time "If they had been alerted and if there were arrangements for evacuation, many valuable lives could have been saved from the cyclone and tidal bore," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said her party members and workers are now engaged in relief and rehabilitation work in the affected areas. She said Awami League workers and members have been instructed to continue relief and rehabilitation work till this is needed.

She told a reporter that relief and rehabilitation work is also being done through the 15-party alliance. She said since Awami League is a well organized party and it has worked at grassroot level, the party could respond immediately to the need of the affected people.

Sheikh Hasina referred to the observance of historic June 7 by her party yesterday. As she was addressing the press conference, portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was seen at the portico of his residence with wreaths placed there.

Awami League leaders Abdul Malek Ukil, Dr. Kamal Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Begum Zohra Tajuddin, Abdus Samad Azad, and Begum Sajeda Chowdhury were present at the press conference.

This was Sheikh Hasina's first press conference after her release from house arrest late last month.

CSO: 4600/1718

BANGLADESH

ERSHAD ADDRESSES MEETING OF FAMILY PLANNING OFFICERS

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 12 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] President Lt Gen H.M. Ershad on Tuesday cautioned against the impending danger of population explosion in the country and said failure to contain the present growth rate effectively might endanger "our very existence," reports BSS.

Addressing the upazila health and family planning officers at the Shilpakala Adademy auditorium, the President maintained that if the present trend of growth continues unabated, the country's population will be 15 crore by the end of the current century.

He pointed out that it is high time for all to be seized with this great problem and find out ways and means for meaningfully combating it. Otherwise all our efforts for a better tomorrow will go in vain, he said.

The President reminded the upazila family planning officers about their onerous responsibility in keeping the size of the population within a tolerable limit and asked them to put in their determined and sincere efforts to achieve this objective in the greater interest of the nation.

President Ershad said: "You are Government officials but with a difference, as the very existence of the nation largely depends on how best you are doing justice to your job. The whole nation is looking forward to your professional success in bringing down the population growth rate," he said.

Referring to the sharp difference between the set targets and the actual achievements in respect of various means of family planning, he said they should identify the reasons behind this inconsistency. He said they must achieve the set target and if there is any difficulty in discharging their responsibility, it should immediately be brought to the notice of the ministry.

The President told the audience that they should also make their field workers understand about the serious consequences of the population boom, and inspire them to work ceaselessly with a missionary zeal for fighting this menace. Given realisation, sincerity and honesty of purpose, no problem is unsurmountable, he said.

He said "if we want to survive as a dignified nation, we must bring down the present rate of growth to 1.5 percent within the next four years." Failure to achieve this target will bring untold sufferings and miseries for the nation, he warned.

President Ershad told the officials that there was absolutely no scope for showing negligence to duties and said "you have to put in hard work keeping in view the rational interests." In this context, he stressed the need for proper maintenance of official records of their performance so that proper evaluation could be made when necessary. He, however, cautioned them against feeding their superiors with incorrect statistics.

He assured them that his Government would do everything possible for ensuring their welfare. "Our resources are limited but we are marching ahead with determination to build a happy and prosperous country," he added.

He said "Bangladesh is no more a basket case. Despite manifold problems and resources constraints, the nation is on its way to progress and the world is watching it with admiration. We will have to accelerate this pace of development and ensure that population pressure does not negate our progressive march."

The President referred to the recent cyclone and tidal surge that hit the coastal belt of the country and said a large number of people lost their lives in the calamity. He said some of the worst hit islands are not still habitable but people are living here risking their lives because of population pressure in the mainland and habitable islands.

In this connection, President Ershad regretted that a section of political leaders sitting in their cosy houses in the capital have raised the question of evacuating lakhs of people from the coastal areas and offshore islands knowing fully well of the capability of the Government in this respect. No country in the world can evacuate lakhs of people in two-three days time, he pointed out.

He said with only a few helicopters and shallow draft landing craft at the disposal of the Government, how could it be possible to evacuate such a huge number of people within three days and that too, under such weather condition. "They will not understand the magnitude of the problems by merely raising hollow slogans and indulging in politics with human miseries since they are isolated from the people and realities," he said.

The President underlined the importance of achieving self-reliance in all the important national sectors for making the independence meaningful. "We do not want to live on assistance and doles any more. We want to live as a self-respecting nation," he asserted.

The Minister for Health and Population Control, Maj Gen M. Shamsul Huq, and the Health Secretary, Mr A.B.M. Golam Mostafa, also spoke on the occasion.

The function was attended among others by Ministers and high civil and military officers.

CSO: 4600/1724

BANGLADESH

UNDER HALF OF SANCTIONED INDUSTRIAL UNITS OPERATIONAL

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 9 Jun 85 pp 1, 8.

[Text] Deputy Chief Martial Law Administrator and Minister for Industries and Commerce, Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud said on Saturday that only 35 to 40 percent of the industrial projects sanctioned by government agencies during past three years had gone into production on schedule.

The DCMLA said that out of the total 4,770 industrial units sanctioned during the period from 1982 to 1984, only 1183 were now in production.

The Air Vice-Marshal was inaugurating the second Consultative Committee meeting of the Ministry of Industries at Sonargaon Hotel.

The meeting was attended by high government officials, heads of corporations and development financing institutions and Presidents of Chambers of Commerce & Industries.

Those who participated in the discussion included Mr M.A. Sattar, President, Bangladesh Federation of Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mr Morshed Khan, President, Bangladesh Chamber of Industry, Mr Mahbubur Rahman, President, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mr M.R. Siddiqui, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mirza Abu Mansur, President, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Al-Haj Mesbahuddin Ahmed, President, Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Mr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Managing Director, BSB, Brig Hubibur Rahman, Chairman, Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority and the Chairman, PDB.

Of the industrial projects sanctioned during 1982-84 period, sanctions to 122 units were cancelled and 273 units were served with show cause notice prior to cancellation, he said.

The DCMLA said that targets set during previous years for growth in the industrial sector could not be achieved due to different reasons. He said that there were some sectors which had become over subscribed. He said care should be taken by both entrepreneurs and officials with regard to investments in those sectors.

The Industries Minister said that the present industrial policy which attached emphasis on the expansion of industries in the private sector had been able to achieve encouraging results in the private investment. Besides, he said, the government had taken some measures including banning import of some industrial items and introduction of "right of refusal" system to encourage the private sector further.

He said that the government was considering measures to enhance the existing facilities to encourage entrepreneurs to invest in industries in the under-developed areas of the country.

The DCMLA said that efforts to give more incentives to foreign investors were continuing. He said that the government would continue to welcome foreign investments in the capital-intensive industries and industries that would create skilled manpower. In other sectors where foreign investments are encouraged included export-oriented industries and industries that would ensure optimum utilisation of local natural resources, he said.

The DCMLA informed that so far 76 industries involving a total foreign investment of Taka 267.59 crore had come up.

He said that production in some industrial sectors such as pharmaceuticals, leather, cigarette, tea, textiles, exportable garments, fans, bulb and battery manufacturing were found to be encouraging. However, he said increase in the growth rate of the industries sector could not be achieved without increasing production of all production sub-sectors.

He said that contribution of industries sector to the GDP during the Third Five-Year plan period had been set at a target of 15 percent. To achieve that target, he said, everyone concerned should put in their best efforts.

The DCMLA said that growth of industrial sector was essential to the national progress, raise production, increase per capita income and reduce unemployment problem.

He urged the industrialists to improve the quality of their products, diversify export base and increase export quantum.

CSO: 4600/1722

BANGLADESH

COUNCIL APPROVES RAILROAD REHABILITATION PLAN

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 14 Jun 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] The National Economic Council (NEC) at its Executive Committee meeting held in Dhaka on Wednesday approved a project worth Tk 186.48 crore including a foreign exchange component of Taka 97.33 crore for the overall development and rehabilitation of the Bangladesh Railway, an official handout said on Thursday, reports BSS.

The meeting was presided over by the DCMLA and Chief of Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Sultan Mahmud.

The programmes to be implemented under the project are placing of pebbles along the 295 mile railway route between Khulna and Parbatipur, construction of 28 mile new rail lines, setting of wooden slipper along 61 mile rail route and welding of 145 mile rails.

Besides, the handout said, the Railway repairing workshop at Saidpur and Pahartali will be rehabilitated and 1500 goods carriers and 300 passengers coaches will also be developed and rehabilitated.

Other activities under the project include modernisation of telecommunications in 450 railway stations, introduction of modern telephone booking system in 350 stations and establishment of 12 telephone exchanges.

The Committee also approved three other projects of Railway Division for shifting of Dhaka Railway station and modernisation of Tejgaon, Dhaka Cantonment, Bhatiarí and Pahartali railway stations.

Besides, the Committee also reviewed the implementation of its decision given during 1976-1984.

CSO: 4600/1729

BANGLADESH

TEXTILES REPORTED TO TOP IMPORT LIST IN CURRENT YEAR

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 11 Jul 85 pp 1, 8

[Text] Textile goods of various categories had been in the top of the import list during the first ten months (July-April) of the current fiscal year.

Letters of credit valued at a total of Tk 531 crore had been opened during this period for the import of textiles. These included textile goods under back to back arrangement by the export-oriented garment industries--Tk 248.40 crore, synthetic fibre and synthetic yarn--Tk 240.67 crore and other textile goods--Tk 42.01 crore, according to Bangladesh Bank sources.

Edible oil was the second in the import list during the period when letters of credit valued Tk 248.25 crore were opened for this essential commodity.

Total letters of credit opened during the first ten months of the current year for other essential commodities included: Sugar Tk 185.53 crore, cement Tk 89.56 crore, milk food Tk 83.38 crore, chemicals Tk 83.46 crore, pharmaceutical raw materials Tk 79.60 crore, iron and steel products including billets Tk 78.18 crore, coconut oil Tk 39.87 crore, drugs and medicine (finished) Tk 36.87 crore, second hand clothing Tk 27.05 crore, C.I. sheet Tk 23.59 crore, oil seed Tk 21.02 crore and salt Tk 10.64 crore.

The letters of credit opened in the month of April were: Edible oil Tk 13.70 crore, oil seed Tk 0.85 crore, textile for garment industries Tk 17.65 crore, synthetic fibre and yarn Tk 5.80 crore, finished drugs and medicines Tk 4.41 crore, chemicals Tk 7.83 crore, pharmaceutical raw materials Tk 5.58 crore, iron and steel products Tk 4.11 crore, milk food Tk 5.45 crore, cement Tk 17.21 crore, coconut oil Tk 9.05 crore and salt Tk 1.99 crore.

CSO: 4600/1723

BANGLADESH

BANGLADESH POSITION ON GANGES WATERS REVIEWED

Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 8 Jun 85 p 5

[Article by Abdur Rahim]

[Text]

THE Indian refusal to renew the Ganges water sharing accord with Bangladesh has once again created a bottleneck in the process of development of good neighbourly relations between the two countries. The last accord known as the memorandum of understanding reached at the summit level expired on May 31, 1984. Since then India has been ignoring the Bangladesh urging for extension of the water sharing treaty and for a permanent solution to the water issue involving the two countries.

The protracted three day 28th Ministerial level JRC meeting which has just been concluded in Dhaka proved to be a futile exercise like the previous one held in Delhi in December, 1984. The recent meeting, although a belated one—raised a ray of hope in the minds of the people of Bangladesh that the new Indian leadership would be amenable to reason and the historical and legitimate right of Bangladesh to the waters of the international river the Ganges would be recognised by India. However, the Bangladesh expectation was not only belied, Indian attitude to sharing of the waters of the Ganges and other common rivers seemed to be even more stiff than before. While India had so far been playing a delaying tactics with Bangladesh in holding negotiations on this particular issue she embarked on the construction of massive water storage schemes to further regulate the waters of the common rivers including the Teesta, thus deny-

ing Bangladesh of her share of waters of the rivers which have been flowing between the two countries from time immemorial.

Meanwhile, the results of the just concluded Dhaka meeting was so disappointing that there was not even a joint statement at the end of the meeting. The two sides also failed to initial agreed minutes which is a mere formality on such occasions. The scheduled conference to be held after the Dhaka meeting at the State Guest House was cancelled unceremoniously. After the first session of the second day of the Dhaka meeting of the JRC, a seasoned Indian diplomat who played a vital role in the talks when asked by a local journalist to comment on the progress of discussion pleaded ignorance and said, in a lighter vein "I can't differentiate one half of the JRC from the other". This simple statement has a special significance. It seems because, India tagged the water sharing issue with that of augmentation of the water flow of the Ganges linking the Brahmaputra with a canal through Bangladesh. Following the refusal of Bangladesh to this unreasonable Indian proposal, India had been unilaterally withdrawing the Ganges waters at Farakka showing utter disregard to the Bangladesh right to the waters of the Ganges. This stand of India is contradictory to all international norms practice and law. The lower riparian country, as Bangladesh is, has inalienable right over waters of the international river.

AND NOW TEESTA

Not being content with the waters of the Ganges, India is soon going to commission another barrage on the Teesta river, at Gazaldoba in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal thus creating further problem for Bangladesh. The Teesta water agreement which was supposed to be documented within 90 days of the initiating of the accord has not yet been done. The secretary level meeting held in Dhaka on this issue in March last ended inconclusively. According to the existing arrangement India will utilise 39 per cent, Bangladesh 36 per cent of the Teesta waters and the rest 25 per cent will remain unallocated. Needless to mention India being the upper riparian country has all the advantage of utilising the unallocated quantity of the Teesta waters. But the scenario will be different when the Gazaldoba barrage project is put into operation, without having a formal agreement with Bangladesh.

The project was supposed to go into operation next month; it may be delayed by one or two months, may be due to some structural change in the barrage for storage of more waters. Meanwhile, India has already had made elaborate arrangement to irrigate vast West Bengal areas with the Teesta waters. While vast areas of Bangladesh is turning, into a desert, gradually, for lack of natural water flow, many desert areas of India are being transformed into fertile land at the cost of Bangladesh.

BELONIA MEETING

The history of abortive negotiations on water sharing is not limited to the Ganges waters. An official level JRC meeting held at Belonia in April also ended inconclusively. The meeting held at the insistence of India discussed Indian objection to the rebatement of the river Muhuri in Feni, by Bangladesh. The rebatement work was done by Bangladesh as per the 1974 border agreement between India and Bangladesh. Both the sides, according to the agreement, have the right to construct embankments on their respective side to save erosion by the river. While India had already constructed huge embankment on the Belonia side, thus causing serious erosion on the Bangladesh side, Bangladesh did not raise any objection to the Indian embankment construction. But India raised a hue and cry when Bangladesh

constructed an embankment to save its land from erosion. India was told in the official level meeting that Bangladesh was within its rights to construct the embankment within its territory.

NEW DIMENSION

The issue of Ganges water sharing has taken a new dimension with the West Bengal Government raising a new claim for 40,000 cusecs of the Ganges waters to flush the Calcutta port. West Bengal has already built one big port at Haldia which may handle the West Bengal imports and exports. Further, experts feel that the Calcutta port might also be shifted to either Diamond Harbour or any other suitable place.

The Bangladesh proposal for storage of monsoon waters in the upper catchment areas of the Ganges basin in Nepal for augmenting dry season Ganges flow was rejected by India. India refused to involve Nepal in the negotiations on the sharing or augmentation of the Ganges water flow. India, however, has undertaken survey schemes in collaboration with Nepal for construction of dams in Nepal and those schemes have received World Bank financial assistance.

Bangladesh and India had so long been sharing the dry season flow of the Ganges available at Farakka under three separate agreements. The first agreement was of a duration of 41 days from April 21 to May 31, 1975 and that was meant for a test running of the feeder canal of the Indian Barrage across the Ganges at Farakka. This agreement gave India right to withdraw 11,000 to 16,000 cusecs of waters during the dry season, leaving the rest 44,000 cusecs for Bangladesh (in the driest period) to flow into Bangladesh. But without concurrence of Bangladesh, India formally commissioned the Farakka barrage ignoring all norms of international law and custom.

After the change-over of the government in Bangladesh in August, 1975, a strained relations persisted between the two countries and India started withdrawing the Ganges waters at Farakka totally forgetting the terms of the earlier agreement. The issue was later taken to the United Nations and it created a world opinion in favour of Bangladesh. Meanwhile, there had been a remarkable change in the Indian government structure: the Congress

government was uprooted and replaced by a coalition Janata Government in Delhi. An agreement lasting for a period of five years—maximum term so far—was signed on November 3, 1977. The agreement had provided a guarantee clause giving Bangladesh the right to get 80 per cent of water in case the Ganges water availability at Farakka below normal limits. The agreement also indicated that both the countries would approach Nepal for construction of water storage dams in Nepal for augmentation of the dry season flow of the Ganges waters. The 1977 agreement was considered to be a major breakthrough in the regional cooperation for the water resources development in the Ganges Basin. The 1977 agreement was also preceded by a mass movement in Bangladesh against the agreement on water sharing. Following exchange of proposals between the two governments India proposed to augment the dry season flow of the Ganges by diverting one lakh cusecs of Brahmaputra waters through a link canal into the Ganges above Farakka. Further, India fell back from their earlier stand to bring Nepal in the Water sharing talks. On the other hand, India has now not only established a bilateral arrangement with Nepal, it has embarked on construction of more than 50 water storage schemes which would ultimately deprive Bangladesh of the natural flows of all the common rivers which are 56 in number.

The last water sharing accord between the two countries was signed between the assassinated Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Bangladesh President H. M. Ershad on November 7, 1982. The accord signed for a period of 18 months expired on May 31, 1984. Now there exists no agreement on water sharing between the two countries.

It is said that some progress has been made in the 29th ministerial level JRC meeting and the two sides would again meet in Delhi within a month. The press as well as the people remained ignorant about the 'success' of the much publicised belated JRC meeting which coincided with the visit of the young Indian Prime Minister to Bangladesh who came to express his sympathy with the victims of the recent cyclone.

International convention on water sharing provides that co-riparian states should refrain from unilateral acts of commissions that affect adversely the legal rights of a co-riparian state in the drainage basin so long as such co-riparian state is willing to resolve differences as to their legal rights within a reasonable time by consultations.

In the eventuality of a failure of these consultations to produce agreement within a reasonable time, the parties should seek a solution in accordance with the principles and procedure (other than consultation) set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The convention also says that riparian states should by agreement constitute permanent or ad hoc agencies for continuous study of all problems arising out of the use, administration and control of the waters drainage basins.

The convention is that each basin state has rights equal in kind and correlative with those of each basin state. We hope India will take into consideration all these aspects and come forward for a lasting solution of the water issue which is a major irritant in the relations between the two neighbours.

Bangladesh wants a negotiated settlement of the issue to quote the assassinated US President J. F. Kennedy we also say "we do not fear to negotiate but we will not negotiate out of fear".

BANGLADESH

BRIEFS

LEADING POLITICIANS FREED--Awami League leader Mrs Motia Choudhury and Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader Mr Rafiqul Islam were released from Dhaka Central Jail and Bogra Jail respectively on Wednesday noon. Meanwhile, Awami League leader Mr Tofayel Ahmed was transferred to Dhaka Central Jail on Wednesday from Comilla Central Jail. It may be mentioned that Mrs Motia Choudhury was arrested from Baitul Mukarram on March 22 and Mr Rafiqul Islam was arrested on March 6. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 13 Jun 85 p 1]

ACCORD WITH DPRK--Bangladesh and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea signed a bilateral maritime agreement on Merchant shipping in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS. The Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and IWT, Mr M.F.A. Siddiqui, and the DPRK Ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr Kim Chol Song, signed the agreement on behalf of their respective governments. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 12 Jun 85 p 1]

SOVIET RELIEF GOODS--The Charge d'Affaires of the Soviet Embassy in Dhaka, Mr Vladimir M. Balashov, yesterday formally handed over a large quantity of relief goods to the Chairman of the Bangladesh Red Cross Society, reports BSS. The relief goods including blankets and clothings were donated by the Alliances of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Society for the cyclone affected people in the coastal areas of the country. The relief goods were earlier airlifted by an Aeroflot flight to Dhaka. While receiving the relief goods the Chairman of the Bangladesh Red Cross Society, Major General (rtd) Abdul Jabbar thanked the Alliances of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Society and the people of the Soviet Union for the donation. Mr Vladimir M. Balashov, on behalf of the Alliances of the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Society expressed condolence for the deaths, and sympathy for the sufferings of the cyclone affected people. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 12 Jun 85 pp 1, 8]

INDIANS STEAL BUFFALO--Rangpur, June 11--Three buffaloes owned by a Bangladesh citizen of Rajibpur upazila were forcibly taken away by a group of Indian nationals. The Indians entered Bangladesh territory crossing the border near the international boundary pillar No 10072 and snatched away the buffaloes from the possession of a boy who was grazing the animals. The Indian nationals beat up the boy mercilessly as he tried to resist them by raising a hue and cry. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 12 Jun 8 p 1]

ILO ASSISTANCE--Geneva, June 9--Mr Franchis Blanchard, the Director General of the International Labour Organisation, assured Bangladesh of continued support from the ILO in the technical cooperation area, reports BSS. He gave the assurance when the Labour and Manpower Minister, Mr Anisul Islam Mahmud, met him here yesterday. Mr Blanchard expressed sympathy for the victims of recent cyclone and tidal wave in Bangladesh. Mr Anisul Islam Mahmud thanked the Director General for his sympathetic attitude to the working people of Bangladesh and called for greater cooperation in this regard. The Deputy Director General for Technical Assistance Programme and the Assistant Director General for Asia and the Pacific Region of the ILO were present on the occasion. The Permanent Representative of Bangladesh in Geneva and government members of the delegation assisted the Minister during the meeting. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 10 Jun 85 p 1]

INTEREST-FREE BELGIAN LOAN--Belgium will provide Bangladesh with a 450 million francs interest free loan to Bangladesh under an agreement signed in Brussels yesterday, an official press release said, reports BSS. Bangladesh Ambassador Manzoor A. Chowdhury and Belgian Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Trade J. Gol and the Finance Minister F. Grootjans signed the agreement. Mr Gol expressed Belgium's deep grief for the immense toll of death, devastation and suffering caused by the recent cyclone. Ambassador Chowdhury thanked the Belgium Government for the sympathy expressed and assistance provided. [Text] [Dhaka THE BANGLADESH TIMES in English 14 Jun 85 pp 1, 8]

STORM WARNING CLAIMED--There were two radio sets in Urir Char and the local people were informed of the danger signal about the cyclonic storm and tidal bore of May 24, according to an official handout in Dhaka Saturday night. The handout said that it was mentioned in a news item published in some newspaper on June 6 that there was no radio set in Urir Char and the people remained uninformed of the cyclone and tidal surge. After the attention of the concerned authorities was drawn to the news item, the local administration came to know by making investigation that there were two radio sets in the outpost of the Government Forestry Department and the workers of the Forestry Department informed the people all around of the danger signal about the cyclone and tidal bore they received through the radio sets. [Text] [Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 10 Jun 85 p 3]

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